

# *Elementary English*

★  
ORGAN OF THE  
NATIONAL  
COUNCIL  
OF  
TEACHERS  
OF  
ENGLISH

★  
OCTOBER,  
1955

WANDA GAG  
THE EVIDENCE ON PHONICS  
FLASH CARDS IN READING  
FROM MANUSCRIPT TO CURSIVE



From Wanda Gag's *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* (Coward McCann)

# Elementary ENGLISH

An official organ of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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### *By Way of Introduction . . .*

In recent years the leading article of each issue of *Elementary English* has dealt with a well-known contemporary author of children's books. This year, at the suggestion of the Elementary Section Committee, the series will consider the illustrators or author-illustrators of children's books. We begin with one of the most distinguished of them, the late Wanda Gag. We are fortunate in having secured so competent an interpreter as DR. BEATRICE HURLEY to inaugurate the series.

Three articles this month deal with the perennial subject of phonics. They may have been inspired by a recent best-selling book which offers as a nostrum an exclusively phonetic method of teaching beginning reading. The author of this book includes among his many extraordinary statements the following: "In every single research study ever made phonics was shown to be superior to the word method; conversely, there is not a single research study that shows the word method superior to phonics." In their dispassionate survey of the evidence, DR. PAUL WITTY and MR. ROBERT SIZEMORE show that the problem is not so simple, that it is not a matter of either-or. Perhaps the most convincing statement in the best-selling book is the assertion that the author spent only two days studying the evidence in the library.

PROFESSOR DAVID H. RUSSELL, also cited in the sensational panegyric on phonics, here reports a study of what the teachers themselves think about phonics. It would seem that the great majority of teachers adopt a common-sense view of the problem.

It is interesting that DR. ANNA D. CORDTS, who has specialized in the application of the science of phonetics to the teaching of phonics, in her article in this issue denounces the study of phonic elements in isolation. She warns that not all phonic methods are sound or helpful.

Mabel, a somewhat obstreperous but always

stimulating visitor to the pages of *Elementary English*, holds forth this month on the use of flash cards. DR. CONSTANCE McCULLOUGH, Mabel's creator, has the rare gift of making educational discussions as exciting as science fiction.

Apparently the schools insist on shifting from manuscript to cursive writing, usually in the third grade. If we must make the shift, Miss LUCY NULTON's suggestions will prove most valuable. But the argument for cursive writing is weak indeed. The individuality expressed by cursive consists of the relative degree of illegibility (surely there is nothing individual about the Palmer or the Spencer method!), and there certainly must be more significant ways of expressing one's individuality. Except for a personal signature, which ought to be accompanied by the typewritten (or manuscript) name, adult life does not demand the cursive. Like that vermiform appendix, the apostrophe, cursive should be abandoned in elementary schools. It is no doubt true, as Ruth Mary Weeks observed in her Foreword to Leonard's *Current English Usage*, that it is no more possible to stop the process of language change than King Canute could stop the tide, but it should be possible for so influential an institution as the school to help the process of change along, in right directions.

Readers of *Elementary English* have come to look forward to MRS. MORTENSEN's helpful brief articles. The geography idea offers many interesting possibilities for the language arts.

This year's convention of the National Council promises to be one of the richest in its history. The difficulty will be one of choosing among the many offerings. Be sure to make your travel and hotel reservations early. For those who cannot attend, *Elementary English* will publish those papers which will be of especial interest to elementary teachers. But if at all possible, come and meet in person your colleagues from all over the land.



# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

XXXII

OCTOBER, 1955

No. 6

BEATRICE J. HURLEY

## Wanda Gag - Artist, Author

The flowering of the many talents of Wanda Gag bear mute witness to the grim struggle which a determined, courageous wisp of a girl successfully conquered. Had she not been able to find "beauty amidst poverty" the world would indeed be the lesser.

No ordinary lass was Wanda. Nor was the lively family of six sisters and one brother around which she was so soon to have to stretch her endearing and protective arms. Few stories of courage equal that of Wanda Gag during those lean years. Her desire to keep the family together as a unit and make it possible for them to continue their high school education necessitated detours into many fields to earn money enough to supply the barest necessities of life. Alternately she made greeting cards, place cards, lamp shades, fashion designs, wrote syndicated

columns, taught a country school. In between, when she could, she spent time in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and New York attending Art Schools.

Reading Alma Scott's sensitively written biography, *Wanda Gag*,<sup>1</sup> gives one a clear picture of the quality of family living out of which the imaginative Wanda and her sisters and brothers developed their latent artistic talents.



*Wanda Gag—Artist, Author*

The Gag household rang with gay activities representing the artistic abilities of each. Drawing, sewing, making plays, singing together to the accompaniment of Anton Gag's zither, Howard's banjo, or Wanda's guitar were almost daily occurrences. There was a wholesomeness of family respect among the members of this artistic family. The six "catch all drawers" in the dining room cupboard overflowed with drawings, paper

Mrs. Hurley is Associate Professor of Education at New York University.

<sup>1</sup>Scott, Alma, *Wanda Gag*, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.

dolls, poems, stories, and songs. Paints, brushes, unfinished and finished paintings, art magazines, port-folios of the works of eminent artists, volumes of folk literature, were part of this interesting household. But greater in influence of all of these perhaps was the deep, full close kinship of living that prevailed and was so fully rewarding to all.

Drawing ran in the family. Both parents were artistic. Anton Gag was a painter. His decorative paintings found their way into churches, houses, public halls in New Ulm, Minnesota, and the surrounding territory. Authentic paintings of Indians are numbered among his contributions. From his Bohemian wood-carver father he acquired an exacting, meticulous way of working. In turn Wanda, who was his almost constant companion, acquired her passion for careful, painstaking, original work.

In her own autobiography *Growing Pains*,<sup>2</sup> Wanda Gag relates her surprise at learning that some families actually existed that did not consider "drawing and painting as essential activities as eating and sleeping." She continues by saying that she cannot remember when she was too young to sketch on her sketching pad. It was as much a part of her as clothing and food.

Wanda's mother, born in Czechoslovakia, had artistic ability too. She was a successful photographer and clever at dress designing as well. Making artistic clothes for each of her six daughters, and supplying their doll wardrobes as well, kept her incessantly occupied.

Enjoying to the full the happy heritage

of artistic parents, Wanda spent her care-free early childhood years among the folk traditions of a piece of the Old World tidily transplanted to New Ulm, Minnesota. This settlement was made up of European immigrants eager to realize the ideals of democracy for themselves and their offspring.

Throughout all of her work Wanda Gag shows the influence of the sturdy and resourceful quality of peasant thinking, feeling, and living. Her roundish, very old man in thick serviceable shoes, and the very old woman clad in apron and scarf tied round her head in *Millions of Cats* are examples of this Old World influence.

As an enthusiastic admirer of Wanda Gag, I am by no means alone. I am, in fact, in excellent company. New groups of children each year discover for the first time the inimitable folk-tale quality of *Millions of Cats* (1928). The spontaneous response of young children to the problem the very old man faces as he attempts to choose just the right cat for his wife is a cherished memory in many households.

Recently a father, upon finishing the reading of this delightful story for the first time to his three year old, noticed that her extended hands were cupped as though intent upon receiving something. Upon inquiring into the nature of her desire she answered, "I want to hold it (the cat) right in my hands. It's so lovable."

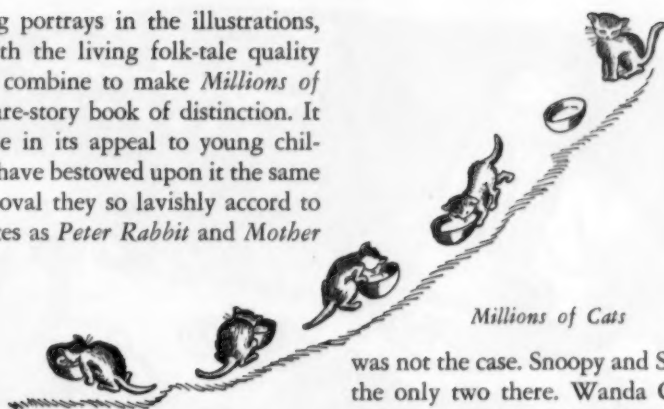
Just sample this refrain and see if you can stop there.

Cats here, cats there,  
Cats and kittens everywhere,  
Hundreds of cats,  
Thousands of cats,  
Millions and billions and trillions of cats.

The strength and tenderness which

<sup>2</sup>Gag, Wanda, *Growing Pains*, New York: Coward-McCann, 1940.

Wanda Gag portrays in the illustrations, together with the living folk-tale quality of the text combine to make *Millions of Cats* a picture-story book of distinction. It is irresistible in its appeal to young children. They have bestowed upon it the same joyous approval they so lavishly accord to such favorites as *Peter Rabbit* and *Mother*



*Goose*. Children respond wholeheartedly to the good story that the author is telling. They identify with the dilemma in which the very old man finds himself. They sympathize with the thin and scraggly cat too homely even to fight. They sense the up and down rhythmic quality and the atmosphere of domesticity of both text and illustrations as the very old man traverses rolling hills and winding roads in his search. The author has produced a picture-story book of gentle and humorous quality, a story so happily concluded that it establishes a solid and honest relationship with each successive young reader. In this sense it is timeless and will go alongside other timeless classics on nursery shelves everywhere.

Typical of the close-knittness of the Gag family in several later artistic endeavors, *Millions of Cats* was lettered by Wanda's only brother, Howard Gag. This open, round style of lettering appears in several of the author's books.

One looking at the drawings for *Millions of Cats* might imagine that "All Creation," the author's country home, was literally overrun with cats. Such, however,

was not the case. Snoopy and Snookie were the only two there. Wanda Gag's earlier training in quick action sketching enabled her to catch these two household pets in the alluringly natural and endearing poses found on many pages of *Millions of Cats*. On one page they are drinking the pond dry. On another, they are denuding the once green hills of every blade of grass. On another, the most remarkable of all, I think, they are scratching each other's eyes out in the quarrel to decide which one is the prettiest. In this drawing even the very old man and the very old woman are so frightened that they have taken to their heels and are about to take shelter inside the "nice clean house with flowers all around it except where the door was."

*Millions of Cats* has yet another claim to distinction. It is the first truly American picture book done by an American artist-author. Up until this time (1928) American children had had to content themselves with English picture books. Perhaps but for the urge to drive herself forward, born of a need to make ends meet, Wanda might never have resurrected this story from the "Rejection Box" where it had resided along with others for quite some considerable length of time. Of this book Anne Carroll Moore says she (Wanda



*The Funny Thing*

Gag) "became quite unconsciously a regenerative force in the field of children's books published in the United States from the year 1928."<sup>2</sup>

Tucked neatly on many a library shelf along with the volume already mentioned, young readers may discover *The Funny Thing* (1929). Here again a quality of Old Worldliness shines through both text and illustrations.

"Bobo, the good little old man of the mountains" encounters an unknown "AM-INAL" demanding good children's dolls to eat. This shocked Bobo, who expected him to ask for the usual fare of cabbage salads, nut cakes, seed puddings, and tiny cherry-sized cheeses—these being the accustomed diet of animals found in these parts.

The resourceful Bobo, responding to the seriousness appropriate to the occasion, employed flattery to trick his visitor:

<sup>2</sup>Meigs, Cornelia et. al., *A Critical History of Children's Literature*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953, page 584.

I suppose you are so beautiful because you eat so many jum-jills?

The Funny Thing had never heard of them. "Jum-jills?" he asked eagerly. "What is a jum-jill—is it a kind of doll?"

"Oh, no," said Bobo. "Jum-jills are funny little cakes which make blue points more beautiful, and little tails grow into big ones."

Now, this Funny Thing was very vain and there was nothing he would rather have than a very long tail and bigger and more beautiful blue points. So he cried, "Oh please, dear kind man, give me many jum-jills!"

The illustration on this page shows an elementally sturdy tunnel-like house along which the little old man travels through a neat little bedroom, a well-lighted study and finally into a well-stocked kitchen "where he usually made food for his birds and animals."

Now he took a big bowl, into which he put:

Seven nut cakes  
five seed puddings  
two cabbage salads  
and fifteen little cheeses

He mixed them with a spoon and rolled them into little round balls. These little balls were jum-jills.

The Funny Thing was delighted. Of course, as he ate them and kept repeating "And very good they are—jum-jills," his little tail became longer and longer and his blue points became bluer. Needless to say there was no more trouble about "doll eating."

I have watched five and six year olds almost instinctively count the ingredients on Bobo's kitchen table. Nor was a careful craftsman like Wanda Gag to be found remiss in her drawing. Not one single one of those fifteen cheeses or of the seven nut cakes or five seed puddings is missing. They are all easily visible and waiting for children gleefully to count.

Another well loved, if not so widely read, volume is *Snippy and Snappy* (1931). As is characteristic of the author-artist's works, *Snippy and Snappy* surges with aliveness. The remarkable degree of intensive reality of two little field mice who live in a cozy nook in a hay field causes children to breathe the breath of life into each. What child could fail to enter wholeheartedly into the reality of the text as it describes Father Mouse reading an evening newspaper just small enough for him to hold easily while Mother Mouse contentedly knits jackets for her family. And what did he read?

Father Mouse read about the big wide world and the many big things in it. He read about gardens in big fields. He read about houses in big gardens. He read about kitchen cupboards in big houses.

But most often he read about big yellow cheeses in big kitchen cupboards.

To add to this descriptive text Wanda Gag enhances children's delight with this homey scene by her clean, clear portrayal of it in black and white drawings. Each

drawing captures perfectly the feelings of each mouse character in relation to his surroundings. Such art is directly communicative to young readers. Both physically and psychologically it is part and parcel of the whole—one incomplete without the other.

Here as in her other stories for young children are those characteristic rhythmical passages which delight young readers. Speaking of rolling the knitting ball she writes:

They rolled it up, they rolled it down,  
They rolled it up and up and down,  
They rolled it up and DOWN and down,  
They rolled it UP and DOWN.  
They rolled it over this and that,  
And over things both round and flat,  
And over things both small and tall,  
Along a long, long garden wall.

Somewhat farther on in the story the author again turns to rhythmic prose. Now Snippy and Snappy are exploring the mysteries of the big house.

On the floor was a fuzzy rug with a border of flowers around it.  
"What's this?" asked Snippy.  
"It's a hay field, I guess," said Snappy, "only these flowers don't smell like flowers, and they're so flat we could never hide under them."  
Then Snappy found a footstool which had green fringe around it.  
"Look, Snippy," he cried, "here's a tree with funny leaves, and it's a tree with four trunks."  
But Snippy had found a map.  
"Such a queer plant," she cried. "It has a wooden stem and not a single leaf—and its roots grow outside of the ground."

In a world where adult concepts often outrun children's understanding, the experience of a five year old finding himself "in the know" as it were with the mice being the uninformed victim of circumstances, is basically delightful.



Nor should the quick action drawings of these adorable mice go unnoticed. Only the artist's careful observation and quick action sketches of these shy creatures as they come close to her sheltered secluded countryside home, "All Creation," could produce such graphic and lovable creatures. They cry real tears—a copious amount. They dance gaily as their graceful long tails flow out behind them. Their beady eyes grow beadier as they shyly stand in wonder before the mouse trap and listen to father say:

With a snip and a snap  
and a trip and a trap—  
and that's the end of little mouseie.

All in all, teachers everywhere might well turn to this slender volume for beginning reading material. It has artistic charm and literary substance upon which children may feast.

*ABC Bunny* was published in 1933. Here Wanda Gag's rhythmic text, supplemented by brilliantly decorative lithographs, accords this volume an enviable place among ABC books for children for all time. The author chose an outdoor setting for her snub-nosed bunny hero so that she might include trees, hills, outdoor animals in her book.

Both text and drawings have an easy sweep and swing especially irresistible, as for example:

Q for Quail  
R for Rail  
S for Squirrel Swishy-tail  
T for Tripping back to Town  
U for Up and Up-side-down  
V for View  
Valley too  
W "We welcome you!  
X for exit-off, away!  
That's enough for us today.  
Y for You, take one last look  
Z for Zero—close the book!

Howard Gag's lettering of the text and the inclusion of the red alphabet letter adds to the artistry of each page of *ABC Bunny*.



*Gone is Gone*

*Gone Is Gone* (1935) is an adaptation of an old folk tale Wanda heard often as a child. Its plot is a familiar one. A man and a woman, unhappy with the present state of affairs, decide to change roles for a day. By evening, each having struggled unhappily with the other's task, is content to be himself again. The old woman contentedly returns to her daily round of chores. The old man returns gladly to the care of the cow, having learned that woman's work is not as simple as it seems.

Here again the author-artist has placed her distinctly original stamp upon both text and pictures. Two sturdy neighbors living in a small Minnesota town were the inspiration for Fritzl and Liesi, the principal characters in *Gone Is Gone*.

Wanda Gag's *Nothing At All* (1941) finds its roots in the author's early interest in gnomes, fairies, and magic charms. Her faith in invisible beings and their power



to live is easily discernible in this story of three small dogs. Far and away the invisible one is the captivating hero of this tale:

He was not very tall  
Nor yet very small;  
He looked like nothing  
Like nothing at all.  
And that was his name—Nothing-at-all.  
Nothing-at-all was happy enough, for although no one could see him,  
He had just as much fun as any other dog.  
He could jump and run and eat. He could hear and see and smell.  
He could bark and romp and play with his two little puppy brothers.  
And Pointy said to Nothing-at-all, "We love you even if we can't see you."

The author-artist wastes no words in her story telling. Each of the dogs, in their pointed, curly, and round kennels respectively, are skillfully etched in direct and straightforward text. And who, except this artist, would decide to portray the invisibility of Nothing-at-all as a small white ball trekking over the long, long road. As the text relates:

But it was a long, long road, and soon his invisible little legs felt weary and his big invisible eyes felt so blinky that he had to sit down and rest. His eyes blinked once and twice and thrice, and then he was asleep.

It was during this sleep that Nothing-at-all became separated from his two companions. This event brought about the necessity of finding some way for Nothing-

at-all to become visible. With the aid of Jackdaw's knowledge of magic, acquired by reading incantations in *A Book of Magic*, Nothing-at-all gradually becomes "Somethingy" instead of "Nothingy." Simplicity and directness of text convey all of this magic effectively:

I'm busy  
Getting dizzy  
I'm busy  
Getting dizzy.

There was no more to it than that! Yet at each successive whirl and swirl and twirl "Nothing-at-all" becomes "Something-after-all" and is happily reunited with his long lost brothers. With joyful barks and wagging his black tipped tail he says:

I've always been small  
And not very tall;  
I used to look like nothing at all.  
I'm still rather small  
And not a bit tall,  
But now I'm a see-able dog after all.

What more soul satisfying conclusion to a story could any young child desire? Although *Millions of Cats* is my favorite, to this book I also accord its full measure of praise.

Among indelible memories of early childhood years, Wanda Gag remembers listening over and over again to the telling of "the old Marchen" tales. The folk tales of Grimm were an intimate part of those carefree, happy years. She pored for hours over German art magazines laden with Old-World illustrations. Later on she became seriously interested in helping children relive the stories she loved as a child. Doing her own free translation of Grimm she has left for the enjoyment of untold generations of children "*Tales from Grimm*" (1936), "*More Tales from*



From *Nothing at all*

*Grimm*" (1947) and *"Three Gay Tales from Grimm"* (1943). All three volumes are illustrated with her characteristic black and white drawings so charmingly un-horrifying that to think of changing them is to ruin the artistic essence of each collection. The witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, the dragon in *The Dragon and His Grandmother*, and *Cinderella's* wicked stepsisters are pleasingly ugly but never terrifyingly so. Gag portrays a playfulness of quality in Grimm's "near gory" characters.

It is a rare tribute to the esteem in which the artist was held by her publishers, Coward McCann, that the volume *More Tales from Grimm* includes those unfinished drawings upon which Wanda Gag was working during her last, long illness.

At Anne Carroll Moore's request, Wanda Gag became interested in a faithful translation of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1938). Calling upon her childhood memory of forests behind her house and the sturdy, resourceful neighbors nearby, she incorporated these into the warmly human and imaginative pictures of this satisfying volume. As is to be expected, she stayed faithful to the spirit of the traditional folk story in her remarkable translation.

In this article only incidental tribute will now be paid to Wanda Gag as an important artist. Her drawings gripped the art world for their ability to record the homely beauty of everyday things. Originals and prints of her work are to be seen in museums and art galleries throughout this country. Wanda Gag's fame as an artist may well outlive her fame as author-

illustrator. However, here we have been concerned chiefly with painting a picture of her contribution as author-illustrator in the field of Children's Literature.

Important works of art were created at "Tumble Timbers" and "All Creation," her two country retreats, as well as at her apartment in New York. Many of these were done after she was relieved of the gnawing economic worries so characteristic of the first quarter century of her life. Many of the subjects of these works, however, deal with the objects, events, and happenings of these poverty-stricken years. "The Tired Bed," "The Lamplight Evening," "The Stone Crusher," "Grandma's Parlor," and "Grandma's Kitchen" number among her well known works.

It was at "All Creation" also where, with the understanding admiration and love of her husband Earle Humphreys, and her youngest sister, Flavia, and her brother, Howard, that her books for children were completed.

Into each book this author-artist has poured the best of her rich talents. Nothing less than the best would suffice. Her work possesses both simplicity in idea and truthfulness in art. Each book lives as all original works of art must live. Readers invariably catch the joy-in-the-doing which Wanda Gag brought to these truly creative pieces of work. And so it seems fitting that

Hundreds of boys,  
Thousands of girls,  
Millions and billions and trillions of  
children  
Now join together to say, posthumously—  
"Thank you, Wanda Gag!"

PAUL A. WITTY  
AND  
ROBERT A. SIZEMORE

## Phonics in the Reading Program: A Review and An Evaluation •

Recently Rudolph Flesch aroused considerable concern among parents and teachers by the publication of *Why Johnny Can't Read*. (12) In this book he contends that Johnny can't read because phonics is not taught in the modern school.

Mr. Flesch, we believe, has over-simplified the problem of reading instruction in a manner similar to that of writers who have sometimes placed the blame for juvenile delinquency on a single factor such as the reading of comic magazines. (29 and 33)

Controversy concerning phonic instruction is neither new nor unusual. In other countries as well as in the United States this issue has been debated for a long time. In recent years interest in phonics has centered upon how, when, and by what methods phonics should be presented. It is of special interest to note the intensity with which this issue has been debated in England as late as 1954. Proponents for and against phonics issued some extreme statements and a moderate point was presented by others. Some newspaper writers have presented rather unbiased points of view based on research.

In America, the recent intemperate views have been set forth by some newspaper reporters and by a journalist. However, Dr. John McDowell, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Pittsburgh, comments sagaciously the revival of this strict phonetic approach to reading has been viewed with alarm by some and joy by others; all, however, have shown considerable interest and concern. Some have vigorously maintained that the phonetic method is not only a way of teaching reading, but *the* way. Some write about it as though it were a new discovery never before attempted, or as if phonetic training has never had any

role whatever in primary reading. (18, p.506)

In order to clarify certain aspects of this issue, the writers propose in this paper to review available research studies pertaining to the use of phonics in reading programs.

One of the first studies was that of Edmund J. Gill. (16) In 1912, Gill reported in the *Journal of Experimental Pedagogy* that he had studied three groups of children from three different schools. One, group X, consisted of children whose average age was six and one-half years and who had been in the process of learning to read for two years. The second, group Y, averaged seven years, two months of age and had also been engaged in learning to read for two years. The Y group had been taught by a phonic method while the X group had used a modified "Dale" method of phonics instruction. The third, group Z, had been taught by the method of wholes—a "Thought or Sentence" method, a procedure in which one learned "to recognize the visual wholes of words in meaningful groups." These children had an average age of seven years, three months and had had sixteen months of instruction in reading.

In his experimental procedure, Gill selected "two paragraphs of equal length . . . from a reading book used in the upper classes of an infant's school. These were printed separately on cardboard, in type similar to that used in the book from which the extracts were made, but without punctuation or spacing." The pupils

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read these selections aloud to the experimenter. Gill concluded that:

Comparing the reading times for the three schools, a striking similarity throughout is shown at those two (X and Y) using phonic methods of teaching to read, thus suggesting the two variations of the one method to be of equal practical value. Their reading times are, however, more than double those than the children at Z, who, in fluency and intelligence of reading, also were equally superior. Further, questions which were asked to find out to what extent the extracts had been really 'read,' i.e., understood, served to confirm the impressions formed by a comparison of the different reading times, of the relative values of word and phonic methods.

It is also worth noting that the mean variation in the case of Z is relatively smaller than the mean variation of the other two cases. The shortness of the average time for the class is not due to a few exceptionally good pupils, but the work was very uniform. . . . The results of the above investigation indicate the greater practical value of the sentence method of teaching to read, as compared with the phonic. (16, p.245)

Gill pointed out further that a comparison of the good readers with the poor readers in his groups indicated that the former groups tended to read by wholes, attending to the word rather than to parts or to letters.

The results [of Gill's study] confirm the views expressed by Claparède in the *Psychologie de l'Enfant et Pédagogie Expérimentale*: "The mind proceeds from the simple to the complex; the fact that the child sees the whole before perceiving its parts does not contradict this statement. For the child, the whole, not being a collection of parts, but on the contrary a block, a unity, to go from the simple to the complex is to proceed from the whole to its part." (16)

In 1912, Dumville reported in the *School World* on "The Methods of Teaching Reading in the Early Stages." (10) As reviewed by Sister M. Dorothy Browne (5), Dumville

"firmly believed that words should be learned as wholes and not in isolated sound parts." He taught upper elementary and secondary school pupils to read by means of a phonetic alphabet. "The control or 'look-and-say' groups were given complete lists of the words occurring in the test, presented in phonetic transcription and regular spelling. The students in this group were told to learn the words as wholes to prepare for a test. The 'phonic' groups were instructed in the powers or sounds represented by the phonetic symbols and then told to apply these to the lists so as to prepare for a test." Following thirty minutes of study "a prose selection containing the words studied was given individually to each student." The author concluded that "there was little difference in the achievements of the elementary school groups, but the students from the secondary school who received phonic instruction were much superior . . . [and] that perhaps both groups used both methods of word attack while studying."

A year later, in 1913, C. W. Valentine (27) reported a comparison of the "Look and Say" method with a phonic approach. In a preliminary test he selected two classes of twenty-four students each in the Training College, Dundee, Scotland and taught them "a passage of English prose written in Greek characters." One group used a phonic approach; the other, a "look-and-say method." After testing, he concluded that "in every test . . . the Phonic method proved superior."

Following this preliminary testing, Valentine subjected two groups of children—ages six-and-one-half to eight years—to similar but improved experimental procedures. From these experiments he concluded:

There seems to be nothing so inherently difficult, even for little children, in the synthetic work involved by the Phonic method as has been asserted by some of its critics. Such synthesis was done readily by infants of six years of age. . . . Children taught by the Phonic method do

better than those taught by the "Look and Say" method, both in reading words previously seen and words previously unseen. . . . There seems to be some evidence, however, that for very dull children the "Look and Say" method is more efficient. (27, p.108)

In discussing the two methods of teaching, Valentine questioned the contention that the look-say method "gains and holds the interest of the children more readily." For "interest in the matter is not lost in slowly plodding through the words letter by letter . . . [and] it may be seriously questioned whether such interest in the matter is always essential at the earliest stages of reading. . . . Too great an interest, indeed, in the story which is being read seems undesirable from a psychological point of view, even when the 'look-and-say' method is being used. [A footnote here explains as follows: "I refer, of course, to reading lessons in school where it is desirable that the child shall be storing up a knowledge of words that he will be able to apply when reading alone."] It may tend to divert attention from the words themselves and cause, not only wild guessing and misreading of words, but also such a very fleeting attention even to words properly read that they are not remembered on future occasions. One does not advance one's knowledge of a foreign language best by reading highly exciting novels in that tongue. . . . At the point at which the interest of the child seems to be failing it is doubtless well to seek to hasten the reading. The ideal plan with the average child would seem to be an alternation of the two methods. . . ." (27, pp.111 f.)

In commenting on his belief that the look-and-say method is better for very dull children, Valentine states that "it may be the only possible method. No doubt it is also the better method for the very dull teacher." (27, p.112)

In 1914, Mabel Hassell and Lillian Varley (17) selected two schools—one in which phonic analysis was taught, and another in which the sentence method was employed, (a

procedure wherein the "words are never taken singly but always in sentences, and the sentence has always a message for the reader.") An oral reading test was given to the one hundred forty-five, seven-year-old children in these schools. The teachers kept records of individual errors and total reading time. The results disclosed that nine boys in the non-phonetic school did attempt "phonetic analysis" while thirty-three boys and six girls in the phonics school did not use such analysis when the need arose. Also a phonic attack often caused the reader to lose "grip of the selection." Whole word readers, too, in both schools completed the selection much more quickly.

In another study, the first and second graders of Tilton, New Hampshire public schools were utilized by Lillian B. Currier and Oliver C. Duguid. (7) "Two classes of equal size and equal average ability were formed" in each of the two grades. One class in each grade was given phonetic drills; the other "had no knowledge whatever of phonics. Words were developed by quick-perception and sense-content methods."

As a result of observations made during the year the writers reported:

The phonic classes so concentrated upon letter sounds that the attention was diverted from the sense of the paragraph to word pronunciation. This brought about lack of interest and fatigue and destroyed the pleasure which the story should yield. The reading was generally less smooth, slower, and the idea confused.

The classes having no phonics were found to enjoy reading for the sake of the story. From the story they got the sense-content. They were less careful and less correct than the phonic classes in regard to word pronunciation. Keeping the sense in mind, they often substituted words from their own vocabulary for difficult or unfamiliar words in the text. They read more swiftly and with more expression. Fatigue was reduced, because curiosity in the story held the interest and caused the attention to be focused upon the outcome of the story. (7, p.286)



A final test for these classes in June of 1916 indicated there was little difference among pupils in attacking new words whether they were phonetically trained or not. Those who were foreign born or who had speech impediments or poor pronunciation habits were helped by phonetic procedures, while the expressionless, the hesitant, or the habitually slow readers were helped by non-phonetic training.

Seven years later, in 1923, Currier (8) reported that she had continued experimentation with third and fourth grade groups throughout a five-year period. Based upon her observations during this five-year period, she drew the following conclusions:

1. "Phonetic drills have a very real value but are not essential to every child as a part of the daily program in the primary grades."
2. "Phonetic drills should at all times be employed with discretion and adapted to the needs of the individual child or special group."
3. "Word pronunciation drills have proved to be of much value." However, they may prove to be only a very good device.
4. "Much careless oral reading and failure to get the idea from the printed page come from poorly or carelessly supervised silent reading."
5. "It is of greatest importance to arouse, hold, strengthen, and develop the interest of pupils."
6. A single phonic system should not be used for every pupil. What is food for one may be poison for another. The needs of different pupils should be ascertained and the best method for meeting particular problems should be employed. (8, p.452)

During a period of years from 1905 to 1924 experiments were conducted in methods of teaching beginners to read in English schools. W. H. Winch proceeded in the belief that the values of various methods of teaching reading differ. (30) In a monograph, published in 1925, he describes his efforts to determine the relative values of teaching reading by the look-

and-say method, by an alphabetic method, by an "ordinary" phonic method, and by a special phonic method called the "phonoscript" method. In the phonoscript method "marks are placed without and within ordinary literal characters which give to every letter a definite and invariable sound. The last proposition is not a reversible one; the same sound is represented, not by one definite shape but by various shapes." Although Mr. Winch set out to "survey the relative success of phonic, look-and-say, and alphabetic methods of teaching reading in its very early stages," his study became "in consequence of the superiority of phonoscript readers in early stages with their own form of print, an evaluation of this system as against an ordinary phonic method." For the early experiments children in the poorer economic levels in London suburbs were chosen. Groups were equated according to their "potentiality to begin to learn to read." The Readiness tests were devised by Mr. Winch. The average ages of the groups of children at the beginning of the experiments were under six years. Mr. Winch concludes:

Phonic and look-and-say methods are put in practice and compared. The result is a victory for the phonic method. A phonic and an alphabetic method are compared. The result is a victory for the phonic method. The most recent phonic system, Mr. Hayes' *Phonoscript*, is compared with an ordinary phonic system; the result is a victory for the phonoscript method. (30, p.174)

Winch also comes to the conclusion that "no phonic method (including phonoscript) produces adequate correctness in spelling." He closes with this recommendation:

... English children, under our conditions of school organization, may quite profitably begin definitely to learn to read at an average age of 5 years 3 months the normative age in London for the commencement of the second half of our Grade II educational year. In schools where the children are well-born and of good environment, they may begin earlier; in



schools attended by very poor children, later. (30, p.176)

Grace Arthur (2) in 1925 reported a study of one hundred seventy-one first-graders in seven public schools of Chisholm, Minnesota. These children were given standardized tests prior to entrance into the first grade and again near the end of the first grade. Arthur concluded:

It would seem from these data that time spent in teaching phonetic methods to children with a mental age of less than five and a half years is largely wasted, since a median score of zero is not impressive as the result of a year's faithful effort. Children with mental ages from 5.5 to 6.4 evidently do gain something from the teaching of phonetics. Yet the increase in efficiency for the next higher mental-age group, 6.5-6.9, is so great as to suggest that age as the better one at which to begin the teaching of reading by this method. (2, p.178)

In the *Journal of Educational Psychology* for April, 1927, Arthur I. Gates (14) reported two studies of the results of phonic training in beginning reading. The first study was made in the Horace Mann School. Pupils underwent daily practice in phonics from November, 1923 to May, 1924. In the other study, four groups of New York Public Schools had training from October 1925 to April 1926. These groups were compared with others equated on the basis of CA, MA, IQ, and "abilities shown in several tests of word recognition, word perception, knowledge of the alphabet and reading."

The groups receiving phonetic instruction were provided with materials which "may be considered as representing the superior types in which phonetic analysis and blending are related as closely as possible to real reading situations." The non-phonetic groups used "exercises arranged wholly to stimulate reading to secure the thought . . . to emphasize comprehension . . . to demand accurate discrimination of words and phrases in order correctly to in-

dicate or express the thought." (14, p.220)

Gates concluded that:

The results of both studies show slight differences between the two groups in gross achievement in the recognition and in the pronunciation of isolated words although differences in methods of attack were apparent. Both groups showed ability to recognize elements in new words and both showed a degree of independent ability to work out the recognition of unfamiliar word forms. . . . In tests of rate and accuracy of pronunciation in oral reading, the two groups were about equally competent in general, although the non-phonetic pupils in the second experiment had had less oral reading experience than the phonetic and probably less than was advisable. In this work the non-phonetic pupils usually showed a greater disposition to depend on the context and to attack the larger word units or features of configuration; the phonetic groups resorted more to detailed analysis of the new words encountered.

*In general efficiency in silent reading comprehension, the non-phonetic pupils demonstrated markedly superior attainments.* If this type of ability is admitted to be the main objective of reading instruction, the non-phonetic training showed a clear advantage. In the second and longer study, the non-phonetic pupils were superior in silent reading by 35 per cent; in the first study their advantage was also marked. (14, p.225)

In 1928 Elmer Sexton and John Herron (23) reported that nearly one thousand pupils took part in a "controlled experiment to test the value of phonics in the teaching of beginning reading." The experiment was started in 1925.

Pupils in eight schools of "various types" from different sections of Newark, New Jersey were divided into phonic and non-phonetic instructional groups. At the end of five months of training and again at the end of ten months the pupils were tested by means of a number of reading tests. Results for those children who had had uninterrupted instruction were com-

pared. Further tests were made on four hundred twenty-six pupils who continued in controlled groups through the first half of the second grade.

The results, Sexton and Herron state:

clearly indicate that the teaching of phonics functions very little or not at all with beginners in reading during the first five months. It begins to be of some value during the second five months but is of greater value in the second grade.

Although the experiment was conducted "to test the value of phonics in the teaching of beginning reading," the results show conclusively that there is immeasurably less difference between classes taught with and without phonics than between different schools. Where results were unusually good in a class taught by a teacher using phonics, they were unusually good when the same teacher taught without phonics. On the other hand, poor results were secured in both phonic and non-phonic groups taught by the same teacher. . . . the outcome of the experiment tends to favor some phonetic instruction, beginning in the second half of the first year. . . . (23, p.701)

Raymond M. Mosher (19) in March 1928 indicated "some results of teaching beginners by the look-and-say method." He had selected previously twenty-six first-graders in the Demonstration School of New Haven State Normal School and employed look-say procedures with them. Vocabulary accomplishments ranging from zero to 1,455 words for different pupils were indicated.

Later, in 1930, Mosher and Sidney Newhall (20) compared a phonics and word approach, using seven classes of first graders in three public elementary schools of New Haven, Connecticut. The children were equated according to intelligence test results. Each group contained children of superior, average, and below average intelligence. After two years' training the pupils were tested for frequency of eye fixations, speed on easy and difficult material, and comprehension.

The authors concluded that:

1. The measures of speed, fixation pauses, and comprehension seem to show, both individually and collectively, no essential difference in the results of the two training methods compared, at least at the end of the second year.

2. If these measures comprise a valid index of reading proficiency then the supposed advantages accruing to phonic training are negated. Look-and-say children under the experimental conditions maintained in the schools are able to read approximately as quickly and effectively as phonic children.

3. In general, our results suggest that added time devoted to phonics would not appreciably increase reading skill, and that therefore phonic training is not especially to be recommended as a device for that purpose. (20, p.506)

S. C. Garrison and Minnie Heard (13) began an experiment in September, 1927 which continued through May, 1930. No child was included "who had any knowledge whatsoever of reading or spelling." "Equivalent group techniques . . . in regard to children, teachers, and teaching conditions" were used. One hundred eleven children were divided into two groups—those of 100 IQ or more, and those below 100 IQ—and placed in four classrooms. One class in each of the two categories received phonetic training during the first and second year but not in the third. Phonetic training was not given to one class in each of the two categories during the same years.

Every effort was made to keep teaching conditions alike except in a fifteen minute period each day, during which the phonetic group received instruction in phonetics. . . . The non-phonetic group during this period used what Gates called the *intrinsic* method—[exercises] arranged to teach children to discriminate accurately between words and to stimulate thought. (13, pp.9-10)

At various times during the three-year period the children were checked by standardized tests. Garrison and Heard stated:

From the data collected in this study, the conclusions stated below appear to be indicated; however, it must be remembered that in many cases the P.E. of the difference between the Phonetic and non-Phonetic is not significant.

1. Training in phonetics makes children more independent in the pronunciation of words.

2. Children with no phonetic training make smoother and better oral readers in the lower grades.

3. . . . bright children seem to be helped more by training in phonetics than are dull. *For all children, phonetic training seems to be more effective in the latter part of the primary grades.* (Italics not in the original.)

4. In the teaching of reading it seems probable that much of the phonetic training now given should be deferred till the second and third grades. It appears that work in meaningful exercises which are planned to increase comprehension and to teach discrimination of words is more important than phonetics.

5. Children who have had training in phonetics have some advantage in learning to spell over children who have had no such training. Training in phonetics would be well worth while for spelling alone if for no other reason.

6. First grade children with no phonetics training seem to lose less during vacation than do children with such training. Apparently, phonetic training makes a young child, particularly a young dull child, dependent upon a device of word analysis which is more difficult to retain than is his own particular method. With the older children, children at the end of the second grade, phonetic training seems to be an aid in retention during vacation. (13, pp.13 f.)

Herbert Carroll in 1931 (6) attempted to assess "through the medium of spelling, the effect of intelligence upon phonetic generalization." Carroll selected words from a list by Gates and tested bright and dull fourth and fifth grade children in Public School 210 of Brooklyn, New York. The results of his testing indicated that the bright children transferred

phonetic generalizations more readily and hence made more misspellings since the rules did not apply to many words. He concluded that "a phonetic-nonphonetic classification of the misspelled words shows that the bright are much more likely than the dull to err phonetically." (6, pp.180 f.) This study suggests the necessity of stressing the exceptions to phonic rules.

For eight weeks—from March 2, 1936 to April 24, 1936—Harry L. Tate (24) experimented with first grade pupils in the Eli Whitney School of Chicago. Dividing the class of 73 into two groups, Tate subjected one group to a phonetic approach—"both in the supplementary and in the basic reading the emphasis in attacking new words was placed on the phonetic method. However, none of the other elements that enter into proper teaching of reading were neglected." While no phonics instruction was given to the control group, exercises devoted to word and phrase recognition, and recognition of the sense of a selection including exercises requiring dramatic action, completion exercises, and exercises requiring oral response were employed. After standardized tests were given, Tate declared:

Phonics instruction and drill . . . is far superior to the look-and-say method in developing ability to recognize words. The results . . . give a slight indication that the look-and-say method is superior to phonics instruction and drill in developing the ability to comprehend sentences. Results obtained . . . show conclusively that the look-and-say method is superior to phonics instruction and drill in developing the ability to comprehend paragraphs of directions. The use of as many as thirty minutes daily for special phonics instruction and drills leads to an unbalanced development of the abilities to comprehend words, to understand sentences, and to grasp the meaning of paragraphs. Other deductions that do not rest directly on the data and therefore do not have the weight of conclusions are:

1. Regular periods for phonics instruction and drill are not desirable.

2. Phonics should be used by the pupil

as a tool and not as subject matter to be mastered for its own value.

3. Overemphasis on phonics hinders rapidity and thoroughness of comprehension. (24, pp.762-763)

Edward Dolch and Maurine Bloomster (9) reported in 1937 that they had studied children in the first two grades of a school "in which the teaching of phonics had been uniform for at least two years and in which phonics had had some emphasis, though not an unusual amount." The children were tested in May, 1935 and again in May, 1936 with standardized intelligence tests and a Word-Attack Series of Dolch-Gray. Dolch and Bloomster commented on their measurement of the pupils' mental development and phonic attainment as follows:

When consideration is given to the difficulty of accurate measurement of young children in both the fields concerned, the relation between mental maturity and the use of phonics is remarkably high. The scattergrams made from the scores show a further significant fact: children of high mental age sometimes fail to acquire phonic ability but children of low mental age are certain to fail. The scattergrams seem to show the thing in which we are perhaps most interested, namely, the minimum age for phonics readiness. Children with mental ages below seven years made only chance scores; that is, as far as this experiment indicates, a mental age of seven years seems to be the lowest at which a child can be expected to use phonics, even in the simple situations provided by these two tests.

It has always been known that some first-grade pupils learned to use phonics; but it is also known that many children reach a mental age of seven years before the end of grade I. Most of the others, though not all, reach the mental age of seven years in grade II. These results seem therefore to check with school experience. They do not tell, however, exactly when the teaching of phonics should be started. Ear-training, which is the basis of phonics, may begin early. Children may be taught to notice the similarities between sounds some time before they are expected actually to use sounding generalizations.

This study does suggest, however, that the schools are perhaps expecting results from phonic-teaching far too soon. (9, pp.204-205)

A research study of college students was reported in 1938 by Maurine Rogers (21). This investigator attempted to determine the relationship between mispronunciation and comprehension, as well as the effects of phonic training upon certain aspects of reading. Seventy-two poor silent readers of the freshman class at the University of Iowa were divided into two groups. One group was given phonic training (a modification of Anna Cordts system) while the other served as a control group.

From her results Rogers concluded that

...Mispronunciation of a word and lack of comprehension of its meaning often go together. On the average, 78 per cent of the mispronunciations in this study were accompanied by inaccurate comprehension. (21, pp.386 f.)

She also found a high frequency of repetitions, substitutions, and omissions in the reading of these freshmen. Thus

any instruction in oral reading should involve training to overcome repetitions and omissions. The high frequencies of these errors justifies more practice in oral reading than in phonics, although the latter should be included if mispronunciations are common in the student's oral reading.

At the college level phonic training is an effective technique for the improvement of pronunciation, oral reading, and reading vocabulary.

The value of phonics in pronunciation in contrast to more sight training lies in the fact that the student is given a tool which will enable him to attack new and unfamiliar words while sight training would improve only the particular words studied. Although it is an aid in oral reading and vocabulary, it should not be used exclusively. Improvement in vocabulary should also include training in suffix and prefix cues, motivation in using the dictionary and any other helpful devices. The value of this research has been to indicate that phonic training is one technique

which may be used in the improvement of vocabulary at the college level. (21, pp.387 f.)

In the *Elementary School Journal* for September and October of 1938, Arthur Gates and David Russell (15) considered the "types of materials, vocabulary burden, word analysis, and other factors in beginning reading."

Three hundred fifty-four pupils, "fairly representative of the population of New York City," in nine classes of four Manhattan schools were equated for mental age and assembled into groups. In one phase of the experiment, three groups were accorded differing types of phonic training. Group D "received the smallest amount of phonics or word analysis." Group E was "given moderate amounts of informal, newer-type word analysis, comparisons, etc." Group F "had substantial or large amounts of conventional phonetic drill."

At the end of the training period, Gates and Russell concluded:

In the case of the scores for the entire groups, although the differences were not marked nor highly reliable, Group E had the highest scores in all the tests of word recognition and comprehension, and Group D exceeded Group F slightly in two of the four, being equal in the other two. The activities used with Group E were, in the main, examples of more recent, informal exercises in comparing, studying, and analyzing word forms. It is significant that the scores of the pupils in that group exceeded those in the groups employing the more conventional or formal phonetic drills by slightly more than one-tenth of a grade in the Gates standardized tests of both comprehension and word recognition. A program including little or no phonetic or word analysis activities in the first year is not as good as the informal program but is at least as good as one containing large amounts of formal phonetic work.

In the case of the group highest in reading—readiness scores, the moderate, modern program of word analysis gave the highest average scores in reading and word recognition, but it barely exceeded the minimum word-analysis program, which in

turn had a very slight advantage over conventional phonics. Since the differences have low reliability, the indication is that it matters little which type or how much phonics is taught to the ablest pupils during the first year but that a moderate amount of the newer, more informal types of word analysis is most promising. The average pupils (those of intermediate reading-readiness scores) appear more clearly to secure greater benefit from this type of experience and to profit best from the conventional, formal phonics. The pupils of lowest reading readiness scores show this trend still more clearly. A moderate amount of informal word analysis is helpful; very little of this type seems to be better than large amounts of formal phonetic drill. The latter apparently does not 'take' well when taught to children of low readiness scores. (15, pp.122 f.)

In 1939 Donald Agnew (1) reported the results of another widely-quoted study. He attempted to determine the relative effects of large and small amounts of phonetic training. Two hundred thirty pupils in Grade III A of Raleigh, North Carolina were chosen as subjects. To these pupils were given a number of tests, both group and individual. In order to determine the extent of the phonetic training the subjects had undergone in grades I, II, and III, a questionnaire of twenty-five questions was submitted to each teacher who previously had taught them.

The study of the pupils in Raleigh yielded inconsistent results:

The comparisons made failed to reveal a significant advantage or disadvantage (in terms of reading test scores) arising from different amounts of phonetic experience. . . . [When the subjects had] large amounts of phonetic experiences in grades I and II, [there appeared] to be a tendency [for reading abilities] to be affected adversely [by the training.] [Yet,] large amounts of phonetic experiences in grades I and III [appeared] beneficial. . . . (1, 33 f.)

"In order to check the results obtained in the Raleigh investigation," and "to provide new



data on the effects of larger and more consistent amounts of phonetic experience than found in Raleigh," Agnew undertook a second investigation. He selected one hundred ten pupils in two schools of Durham as subjects. "In the selection of these schools, two principles were borne in mind: first, it was desirable to obtain subjects who had experienced large amounts of phonetic training; and second, it was desirable to obtain a distribution of subjects comparable to those used in the Raleigh investigation." (1, 36) These children were tested and then eighty-nine from the Raleigh group were compared with eighty-nine from the Durham group.

From the second investigation Agnew concluded:

The comparatively large and more consistent amounts of phonetic training received by the Durham pupils seem to have resulted in greater phonetic abilities....

Not only were the Durham pupils "superior to the Raleigh pupils in word pronunciation ability" but also seventy per cent of the Durham pupils "used phonetic methods of word pronunciation," while only thirty per cent of the Raleigh subjects did so. "Comparatively little difference [appeared between the two groups] ... in the silent reading abilities measured." The Durham group, moreover, had a larger vocabulary, was "slower but more accurate in oral reading, and had a greater eye-voice span than the Raleigh pupils. Mr. Agnew inferred that these were the results of the phonic training given the Durham group. (1, pp.42 f.)

Sixth grade pupils who "had received their early training during a period when phonics were in disrepute and training in them was not generally given" were selected by Sister M. Dorothy Browne as suitable subjects for a remedial program using phonics. (5) Three hundred twenty-six pupils from parochial schools in Chicago, Detroit, and the District of Columbia were divided into four experimental and four control groups. The groups were equated on the basis of reading age and in-

telligence. For approximately a school year, the experimental groups were given daily ten-minute phonic drills preceding the regular reading lesson. The phonic program followed the approach of Anna Cordts in which "the phonetic elements are studied in words, phrases, and sentences." At intervals during the experimental program the subjects were given standardized reading tests. From these tests, Browne concluded that:

1. Progress in reading in the sixth grade may be aided by a carefully planned series of lessons in phonics.

2. Children with low IQ's are as likely to profit from phonic instruction as those with higher IQ's.

3. Children with IQ's below 100 make more progress in reading as a result of phonic instruction than those with higher IQ's.

4. The study of phonics is helpful not only to the pupil who is deficient in reading, but it is even more effective in stimulating the better reader to further growth.

5. The greatest gain in favor of phonetic training for children with initial reading ability of average and above grade is evidenced in groups with IQ's between 90 and 109. (5, p.42)

Sister Browne comments that "the significant progress made by subjects with IQ's below 90 is not a denial of the conclusions drawn by Dolch (9), but seem to confirm the assumption that the ability to apply phonic analysis depends upon the attainment of a certain mental age, rather than the possession of a particular intelligence quotient. Dolch considers a mental age of seven years as the lowest level for phonic readiness and the lowest mental age in the present study was nine years and five months." (5, p.38)

She maintains that:

In general, the findings of this study evidence a specific value to reading achievement in simple systematic phonic lessons when these lessons are used as one of a number of aids to accurate word recognition. This conclusion may be reconciled with the opinions of those who



oppose the use of phonics in beginning reading as well as with the opinions of those who reject any but a meaningful analytical approach. Since the study of phonics produced results as a remedial measure in reading, it would seem that they have a proper place in a primary reading program. A timely correction of method instead of the complete abandonment of misused educational practices would do much to obviate the necessity of great amounts of remedial teaching. (5, p.39)

In *School and Society*, February 1940, Joseph Tiffin and Mary McKinnis (26) reported their study of one hundred fifty-five pupils from the fifth through eighth grades of the Longlois School in Lafayette, Indiana. In an attempt to determine the relationship between phonic ability and reading ability they gave these pupils Roger's individual phonic ability test of "one hundred nonsense words utilizing most of the letter combinations found in the English language," the Iowa Silent Reading Test, and the new Stanford Reading Test. The following correlations were computed:

Reading Criterion	Correlation with Phonic Ability
New Stanford Reading Test	.70 $\pm$ .027
Iowa Silent Reading (Comprehension)	.66 $\pm$ .030
Iowa Silent Reading (Rate)	.55 $\pm$ .038

"These correlations show with reasonable certainty that phonic ability is significantly related to reading ability among the pupils studied." (26, 191)

Tiffin and McKinnis pointed out further:

For the 155 pupils studied, representing an age range from 9 years 11 months to 15 years 9 months, there was practically no relation between phonic ability and chronological age. The coefficient of correlation was  $-.08-.055$ . (26, 191)

In concluding, the authors commented:

Though the present investigation shows that a functional mastery of the isolated principles of phonics is significantly related to reading ability, the authors do

not conclude that reading should be taught by drill in the isolated principles of phonics or that drill should necessarily be given in all cases of retarded reading. But it is felt that a program of reading instruction which does not, by direct or indirect instruction, yield a mastery of the principles of phonics is not accomplishing its full purpose. . . . It seems highly probable that cases found to be markedly deficient in phonic ability and not markedly deficient in other important characteristics, may be profitably treated by instruction and drill in the specific principles of phonics. . . . Such cases are obviously rare. It is not often that the source of the difficulty in a retarded reader can be traced so directly to a single causative factor. Yet the existence of even a few such cases, coupled with the evidence of the present study that phonic ability is related to reading ability, points to the conclusion that the pendulum may have swung too far and that we have been too much neglecting this phase of reading. (26, p.192)

David Russell (22) reported in December 1943 a diagnostic study of spelling readiness among four classes of one hundred sixteen pupils when they were in the first grade and early part of the second grade. In two of the classes the teachers employed phonics while in the other two classes little phonics was used in the reading programs. These Vancouver, British Columbia pupils were tested in May, June, and November of 1941 with seven individual and six group tests.

Russell stated:

The results support the findings of Agnew and others that considerable phonics instruction in the first grade has a favorable influence upon achievement in word recognition and accuracy in reading. They indicate that some of the habits of attention to parts of words, of seeing similarities and differences in words, and of recognizing common phonograms in words, or other habits developed in phonetic analysis, apparently are of value in early attempts at spelling English words. The results do not establish, however, a

clear pattern of cause and effect relationships between phonetic instruction and successful visual and auditory perception. It is important to note that the teachers of the 'phonics' group used more than a phonetic method with an exclusive reliance on the sound of words. Accordingly it is not possible to say definitely that work in phonics improves visual and auditory perception as measured by the tests used, or that practice in visual and auditory techniques necessarily is the cause of good phonetic analysis and high early spelling achievement. It would seem rather that the visual and auditory techniques are part-and-parcel of the program of phonetic instruction in the classes studied, and that separation into cause and effect is unwarranted. The chief point probably is that primary pupils may acquire a group of basic word skills which are necessary for success in reading, spelling, and other language activities. (22, pp.278 f.)

In October 1953 The Reverend John McDowell (18) reviewed data from a study of ten parochial schools in the diocese of Pittsburgh. Five schools were recommended by a supervisor as schools in which the phonetic method was in use. The school office of the diocese selected five schools of comparable "intelligence and socio-economic levels" in which a "diocesan-approved" program "included phonetic training, as a subsidiary word-attack skill which is introduced gradually and developed through analysis of meaningful material." (18, p.507)

The pupils were given a series of tests during the fourth grade. Ten fourth grades were selected including 550 students. Computation of data, however, included "only those whose entire primary work was uninterrupted in either the phonetic or regular reading programs. . . ." (18, p.509)

One hundred forty-two fourth graders who had used the phonetic method and a comparable number who had used the "diocesan" method from the beginning of their entry into the first grade were compared on the results of the Iowa Silent Reading Test. Dr. McDowell

concluded:

The group following the diocesan program, . . . reads faster, understands words, comprehends paragraphs, uses the index, and, in general, reads better than the phonetic group. The latter, however, is better at alphabetizing. . . . "On Directed Reading and Sentence Meaning [parts of test] the groups are about the same." (18, 510)

The results of the Metropolitan Reading Test of 128 pupils in each group indicated that "the trend on the reading and language usage tests strongly favors the diocesan program," although the results were not statistically significant.

on the spelling test, however, those following the phonetic program were clearly superior to the other group and the difference is very significant . . . That the phonic group is doing superior work in alphabetizing and spelling should not be surprising. From the very beginning, training in the alphabet and spelling is stressed . . . Children who are taught to spell from the beginning should excel in these skills. The strange thing is that they are not better at such skills. The fourth graders following the phonetic method had a 5.4 grade equivalent in alphabetizing and a 5.3 grade equivalent in spelling. The group following the diocesan program had a 4.7 in alphabetizing and a 4.9 in spelling. The norm for both groups is 4.5 since the tests were administered in January of the fourth year. (18, p.513)

. . . for the phonetic group, their word meaning grade equivalent was 4.5 and their grade equivalent for paragraph comprehension and sentence meaning was 4.1. It is not difficult to see what must be sacrificed in a program that is oriented toward pronouncing and spelling skills. (18, p.513)

The group following the diocesan program had [a] grade equivalent for word meaning . . . [of] 5.1; it was 4.6 for Paragraph Comprehension and 4.4 for Sentence Meaning. . . . There is a more rounded and harmonious development of reading skills and nothing is sacrificed. One can hardly complain about children midway through the fourth grade being

able to spell at the level of children who are completing that grade. (18, pp.511-514)

McDowell also matched 56 pupils who had missed the first semester (5 months) of the phonetics program with 56 pupils who had had the entire phonetics program. He concluded:

Apparently after three and a half years, it makes little difference whether the child had those first five months of extensive drilling in the mechanics of pronouncing and rhyming. In fact, the Phonics B group [group that missed the first five months] did about as well in alphabetizing as the Phonics A group [group which had the total program.] On those skills so fundamental to reading, Phonics B group is doing slightly better work. (18, p.515)

When McDowell compared "the performance of children in the best phonic program [64 pupils] . . ." with all 142 pupils using the diocesan method, he stated: "The conclusion should be obvious. The phonetic method, even under ideal conditions, is not accomplishing the results that it is said to accomplish." (18, p.516)

Three hundred eighteen pupils in five Minneapolis public schools were tested near the end of their fourth grade by Mildred Templin. (25) She reported in February 1954 that her study was

concerned with the relation of phonic knowledge irrespective of how it was acquired, to spelling and reading achievement. [Specifically] it was designed to investigate: (a) the level of phonic knowledge of fourth grade pupils, (b) the relation between phonic knowledge and reading and spelling skill at this grade level, and (c) what differences, if any, exist in the phonic knowledge of good and poor spellers and of good and poor readers. (25, p.441)

Phonic tests were constructed and administered over a two weeks period. Reading tests were also given as a part of the regular school testing program.

The tests established that a "substantial amount of phonic knowledge" was acquired by these fourth grade pupils and that phonic knowledge was somewhat more highly related to spelling than to reading. Further, the pupils had higher scores when the test item was a familiar word rather than a sound or nonsense-word. These pupils did not apply phonic knowledge "equally in all of the recognition tests. . . . For the experimental sample there are real differences in the degree of application of phonic knowledge by fourth grade pupils under various conditions." (25, pp. 445, 448, 453)

That the poor spellers and poor readers applied their phonic knowledge less well than good spellers and good readers in the unfamiliar test situations while the difference was not significant when phonic knowledge was measured in familiar words is an intriguing finding. The degree of understanding of sound-symbol association differs for the upper and lower deviate groups although the measured scores show little difference in the familiar test situation. This may indicate a real difference in the ability of children of similar intellectual level to transfer what they know from one situation to another. On the other hand, it may be related to the various methods of teaching used with these children or to the particular testing procedure used in this study. (25, p.454)

For a doctoral study at the State University of Iowa, Louise Beltramo (4) formulated an alphabetical approach\* "for helping first grade children develop independent word-attack skills useful in identifying words in their everyday reading." An experimental group of five classes of one hundred twenty first grade children received an extra period of "word recognition instruction" for twenty minutes each day during the first semester and twenty-five minutes three times each week during the following semester. The control group of eighty-six children re-

\*No explanation was given as to the nature of this "alphabetical approach" in the abstract of the dissertation which the writers read. Beltramo does refer to "phonic readiness skills."

ceived only the regular program. "The teachers carried on the entire reading program in their usual manner, which it was assumed would exemplify the emphasis and practices provided for fostering independent word recognition in the average classroom."

The groups were tested before and after the experimental training period. From her study, Beltramo concluded that children taught by this experimental procedure made higher reading scores but that the results were not statistically significant. The "children who ranked in the upper third of the class" were definitely helped in reading achievement. Further, she stated, "First grade children can learn the phonic readiness skills as well as the basic phonic skills. For most children, systematic instruction is important for gaining proficiency in these skills." Spelling ability was also helped by the experimental procedures. (4, p.2290)

Mary Watkins (28) in a recent (1953) doctoral dissertation compared the reading proficiencies of children who were progressing normally through school with children of the same IQ and reading level but who were "retarded readers." She selected "third grade children making normal progress in reading and children of grades 4, 5, and 6, reading at the third grade level." Sixty-four pairs were selected from among these children. Each pair consisted of one retarded and one normal-progress pupil. These were matched for mean reading grade, IQ, and sex. After testing these children with standardized tests, Watkins stated: "Retarded readers seem to possess more phonetic knowledge than the normal-progress group but the retarded readers do not apply this knowledge." (28, p.644)

In the spring of 1954, Ralph Bedell and Eloise Nelson (3) reported results of a study involving regularly enrolled fourth, fifth, and sixth graders of the middle school of the National Cathedral School for Girls, Washington, D.C. Working with these sixty pupils of "superior intellectual ability and of high socio-

economic level," the investigators gave the experimental group (one-half of the students) instruction in three kinds of word attack—"meaning involving the use of context clues and expectancy of words and concepts; visual, involving visual characteristics of words (identification of known parts within words, use of syllabification, use of prefixes, suffixes, and root words); sound attack, sounding of vowels, consonants, vowel and consonant combinations, and use of other methods of phonetic analysis." Instruction was offered for thirty minutes a day for fifteen days. In all other respects the experimental and control groups had similar training. Tests were given before and after the training period. In addition, pupils in the experimental group wrote daily self-evaluations of each exercise.

Bedell and Nelson state that the experimental group was superior and that "net changes in total scores received by the combined fourth, fifth, and sixth grades on the pre-test and post-test were found to be statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence." (3, p.173) They concluded that the procedures used in their study produced superior results and could be used with other elementary school children advantageously.

In 1954 Lloyd Dunn (11) reported a study of certain aspects of the reading of mentally normal and mentally retarded boys of the same mental age. Dunn selected boys of mental age 8-10 and tested them by means of various standardized tests.

From the test results, Dunn concluded that

as to qualitative aspects of the reading process, clear-cut differences appear to exist between mentally retarded and normal boys of the same mental age in ability to use context clues; retarded boys are very inferior in this skill. While reading, they tend to make more faulty vowels and omissions of sounds than mentally normal boys; they make, significantly, fewer repetitions. There would appear to be no differences between the two groups of boys in tendency to make

reversal errors, in handedness, in mixed lateral preference, or in speed of recognition of phrases and words.

A number of other factors probably do contribute to the general reading disability of mentally retarded boys. As compared with mentally normal boys of comparable mental ages, they tend to have an excessive number of hearing and vision difficulties. On the basis of teacher ratings, they appear to be more maladjusted, and to come from inferior home backgrounds; parent-child relations in the homes of handicapped children tend to be particularly poor. (11, p.300)

### Concluding Statement

In this paper the writers have reviewed research concerning the place and value of phonics in a reading program. From this review one may conclude that the nature and amount of phonic instruction to be given is still a debatable question. Adherents to any one of a number of positions may find justification for their views in published sources from the devotees of the doctrine of "no phonics" to the advocates of a highly artificial approach. Despite this fact certain trends do appear and certain recommendations may be made tentatively.

A readiness program for phonics can safely be recommended, since research studies substantiate the need for phonic readiness. Moreover, many phonic systems appear to be difficult for most five and some six year old children. Such children frequently become hopelessly confused and discouraged after exposure to involved systems of phonics instruction. Mental age and other factors are important in determining the propriety of using a phonics approach. Hence phonic readiness should be ascertained before instruction is offered. In this respect, the findings of the research studies are in accord with the experience of teachers.

Phonic systems may develop a tendency in children to recognize words piecemeal. This emphasis results, particularly when the method

is used apart from a meaningful approach in very slow reading. The child is often so hampered by his attempts to sound out each part of a word that he fails to react to natural, larger perception units in oral and in silent reading. The research studies indicate this limitation of phonic systems.

Another limitation of phonics instruction is that it does not utilize other techniques that bring about quick, accurate word recognition. Children and adults often recognize words quickly, as wholes, and often recognize groups of words with rapidity too. The good reader does not see each letter or all the letters. He may, for example, respond to the total form of the word and thus be aided in recognition of it. Accordingly, a soundly conceived program of word recognition is not limited to phonic procedures. Instead, it is a broad program associated with meaningful reading; it utilizes phonics as only one part of the total approach. Again, the research studies point to the merits of this broader program of word recognition.

Many children do need help in the mastery of phonic skills although some appear to have made satisfactory progress in reading without formal instruction. Therefore, a system of careful diagnosis of individual needs should precede the introduction of instruction in word analysis at all levels. Many workers believe that phonic instruction is particularly effective with some disabled or very retarded readers. It is, however, not the only procedure employed nor the sole procedure used with such readers.

The value of phonic approaches with very poor readers is suggested by the work of one of the writers in association with Norma Olson (32) In this study, work began with experience charts. After a basic stock of sight words was mastered, phonic exercises were introduced. These exercises were designed to give practice in the application of principles formulated by the pupils themselves. With older pupils this approach proved particularly successful. Several of the research studies agree with these findings.



It is well to remember that many basal reading programs give attention to phonics adequate to meet the needs of most children. If children fail to acquire competency under such a program, it is perhaps desirable to introduce some special approach. However, this work should always be articulated closely with the basal program and care should be taken to make the entire approach individually appropriate and meaningful. Phonetic study should begin with known words and an auditory-visual emphasis should be employed.

The research studies do *not* substantiate the contention of Flesch and others that we can have perfect readers by using a phonics approach at an early age. Some shortcomings "in our total instructional program—for which the causes are not in our methods but in our lack of teachers, classrooms and adequate supplies and equipment" (31, p.35) affect our teaching of reading. To obtain better results, we need better prepared teachers, more adequate and improved instructional materials, and closer cooperation between homes and schools. There are other needs too. But these needs do not include another system of phonics to be employed by parents with children at age five on the assumption that the use of this system will solve our reading problems. (31)

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DAVID H. RUSSELL

## Teachers' Views on Phonics

Teachers' positions on phonics undoubtedly range from those who believe in teaching reading without any use of phonics whatever to those who regard the method as the only way of teaching, to be pursued vigorously in workbooks and in letter- and word-sounding exercises. Between these extreme positions most teachers would undoubtedly place themselves. This article reports a little study of the views of about 220 experienced teachers and other school people from 33 different states on the place of phonics in the reading program.

Nowadays teachers must have fairly clear-cut opinions on the place of phonics in reading activities. Parents, school patrons, and some newspapers are questioning the schools' reading methods. This small study was started in 1954 before the furore created by a book advocating one method of phonics as the only way to teach reading. Although this book is ludicrous in its errors when considered from the

scientific point of view, nevertheless it has had the useful effect of stimulating general interest and of spurring school people to think through carefully their positions on reading instruction. Over half of the teachers responding in the present study did so before this particular book on phonics had been published and in nearly all cases their replies indicate what they believe and do about phonics, uninfluenced by a particular publication.

Phonics has long been a part of American reading instruction. It was criticized by Horace Mann in the 1830's but actually grew in importance in the late decades of the nineteenth century. Most selections in the ubiquitous McGuffey readers were preceded by word lists, and it would seem that teachers using these books employed

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some form of phonics method combined with a word method. Different phonics systems flourished in the early 1900's and 1910's and much place was given in professional magazines and teachers' meetings to a discussion of "initial blends" versus "final blends" and similar topics. A study by Woody in 1916 found that the average teacher used one-sixth of all reading time on phonics instruction and some used over one-fourth of the time on phonetic drills. By the 1920's the emphasis on silent reading, and in the 1930's the rise of the "experience approach," had the effect of reducing the amount of phonics in favor of other aspects of the reading program. During these years careful researches also gave guidance to teachers on the advantages and disadvantages of much phonics work in the reading program. Thus the question became what it is today. The problem is not the simple, black-and-white one of phonics versus no phonics, for all reading systems and methods give some place to phonetic analysis and related procedures. Rather the question is the more complex one of *what, how much, when and to whom*. Unfortunately perhaps, this is not the simple either-or proposition that some people would like to believe it is. Rather, it is the infinitely more practical and complicated one of just how do we use phonics with the children in today's schools.

The following study is not a detailed or exact analysis of what teaching should be done of long and short vowels; initial, medial, and final consonants; blends and digraphs; phonograms or word families; syllabication; diacritical marks; combining visual and auditory techniques and the hundred skills that make up an adequate

phonics program. The development and value of such skills should be studied over a period of years in a representative group of children using every scientific device that can be mustered. Knowing how children differ, this writer would hazard the guess that there is no one best method, no exact timing, no one set of materials which is best for all children. The ingenuity of teachers and their knowledge of individual youngsters will always be needed in the complex task of learning to read. Although no such detail is attempted here, the reactions of a group of school people to the place of phonics is currently of interest.

In the present study some 220 experienced elementary teachers and other school people stated their views on phonics programs. Thirty of these unsigned statements were from supervisors or principals. The group was asked for their views on phonics in summer session classes at Teachers College, Columbia University, the University of California, Berkeley, and at the University of Oregon *before* the question of phonics was discussed in class or presented by the instructor. In other words, the free-response replies and the items checked gave each teacher's belief before he knew what the university instructor was going to say or do about the problem.

The sample reporting was too small to consider the replies as indicative of the position of all elementary school teachers; the writer is inclined to believe, however, that it was a fairly representative sample. As stated above, the respondents taught in 33 states. Over a hundred were in primary and some eighty-five in the intermediate and higher elementary grades. The sample was heavy in teachers from New York

State, California, and Oregon but the fact that the teachers were in summer session classes probably did not spoil the representativeness of the sample. Nowadays most teachers are engaged in some sort of in-service work with the aim of improving their professional competence. Here, then, are the replies of a fairly representative group of elementary school people about the phonics program.

First, who should receive such instruction? These teachers ranged in their beliefs from all pupils to no pupils receiving instruction in phonics. The answers to the question were as follows:

"A complete, intensive course of phonetic analysis (phonics skills) should be presented in the elementary grades to"

	Percentages			
	Primary Teachers	Inter-mediate Teachers	Super-visors*	Total
All pupils	28	31	24	29
Most pupils	29	24	17	25
Some pupils who seem to profit especially	31	39	52	37
Retarded pupils only	2	0	0	1
No pupils	10	5	7	8

\*Includes elementary school principals in all results.

The results indicate a belief in the teaching of phonics. There is a slight tendency, especially in the supervisor-principal group for this instruction to be given to some children who seem to profit from it. Primary teachers divide evenly in their views about this possibility and the first two categories listed.

Second, since a few writers claim that phonics skills are not taught in the schools today, the replies to a question on what

place these teachers actually give to phonics is of interest.

"I teach phonics skills"

	Percentages		
	Primary Teachers	Inter-mediate Teachers	Super-visors
Not at all	1	2	9
As part of a few reading lessons	26	59	26
In most reading lessons	53	21	43
In all reading lessons	5	2	9
In lessons regularly scheduled but separate from other reading	15	16	13

These replies give a clear indication that phonics skills are being taught. Seventy-eight per cent of the group teach phonics as part of some or most reading lessons. The emphasis here seems to be on making phonics a regular part of the reading activity, closely tied in with other reading, and not a separate skill to be practiced in isolation.

Third, the question of *when* is important. For example, shall there be a heavy phonics program in first grade when many children are making their first adjustments to school? This group of teachers answered the question, "I believe that phonics skills should be emphasized most"

	Percentages		
	Primary Teachers	Inter-mediate Teachers	Super-visors
In no particular grade	25	35	39
In grades 1 and 2	25	20	32
In grades 2 and 3	40	37	21
In grades 3 and 4	7	9	4
In grades 5 and 6	2	0	4

This group favors an emphasis in either grades two and three or in different grades depending upon need.

The fourth question was concerned with the controversial one of separate phonics workbooks. The group replied as follows:

"I use separate phonics workbooks with"

	Percentages			Total
	Primary Teachers	Inter-mediate Teachers	Super-visors	
All pupils	5	4	16	6
Most pupils	7	1	8	5
Some pupils who profit especially	24	30	28	27
Retarded pupils	7	6	4	6
No pupils	57	58	44	56

The consensus here is clearly against using separate workbooks or using them only with some pupils who profit especially.

In contrast to separate workbooks, the next question dealt with phonics as part of a basal reading program. The replies to the question, "I use suggestions for phonics activities contained in the teacher's manual for a basic reading series"

	Percentages			Total
	Primary Teachers	Inter-mediate Teachers	Super-visors	
Not at all	1	11	0	5
Some of the time	36	50	64	45
In most reading lessons	44	26	16	34
In all basic reading lessons	19	13	20	17

The replies to this question, like those mentioned second above, dispose pretty well of the statement that phonics skills

are not being taught today. They are being included either some or most of the time.

A sixth question dealt with phonics as one of a group of word-attack skills. The replies were as follows to the question, "In my teaching, the word attack technique that children find most useful is"

	Percentages			Total
	Primary Teachers	Inter-mediate Teachers	Super-visors	
Phonetic analysis	6	1	4	4
Structural analysis	0	7	0	3
Context clues	6	10	16	9
Sight recognition ("look-say")	2	1	0	1
A combination of these methods	86	80	80	83

These teachers believe that phonics, or any other one method of word attack, is not the complete answer to the problem.

A related question dealt with the sources which teachers find most useful in helping them prepare lessons on word-attack skills. The replies were to the question, "In teaching word-attack skills I get most help from"

	Percentages			Total
	Primary Teachers	Inter-mediate Teachers	Super-visors	
Gray's book <i>On Their Own in Reading</i>	6	8	10	7
A general book on the teaching of reading	0	11	5	4
A separate set of workbooks	3	3	5	3
The teacher's manual in basic series used	80	69	57	73
My local curriculum guide	11	9	24	12

Teachers were asked to name the general book on reading and the set of workbooks but there was considerable spread in titles here. The dominance of the teacher's manual is consistent. It may be noted in passing that supervisors and principals, who often work on local curriculum guides, seem to get the most help from them!

Another question dealt with the problem of balance in the total reading program or more particularly the place of phonics and other word-attack skills in relation to other phases of reading activity. The group believed that, "In the teaching of reading most attention should be given to"

plied to the detailed questions summarized above. The group was asked to comment freely on the question, "What is the place of phonics in the reading program of the elementary school?" Here there were three predominant statements. One was that phonics instruction has a definite place in the reading program. The other two were "a good method for attacking new words" and "only one of several methods useful in word attack" which placed phonics skills as one particular part of total reading behavior. The other comments offered by a substantial part of the group were that phonics should be taught when needed by the individual child, that it should not be taught in isolation from other reading activities, and that it should be stressed in grades one, two, and three. A few people commented on dangers of overemphasis and others on the necessity of a systematic, planned program of instruction.

For the sample studied, there is no doubt about beliefs or practices in phonics as part of the elementary school's reading program. Such questions as illustrated here may be used by local school systems in reviewing their practices and in presenting these practices to parents and the community. In the sample studied, just as there is no doubt about phonics being in the program, there is equally clear indication that the method is not regarded or used as a total or sole method of reading instruction. Phonics is seen as only one method of word-attack, and word-attack skills in turn are viewed as only one goal in the total program of developing understanding and thoughtful readers in our schools and communities.

	Percentages			
	Primary Teachers	Inter-mediate Teachers	Super-visors	Total
Word-attack skills	2	0	0	1
Understanding of material read	13	9	4	10
Improvement of speed and comprehension	1	0	0	0
Enjoying books and libraries	0	1	0	0
Using reading in various ways	2	6	54	11
A combination of the above and other activities	82	84	43	77

These replies indicate clearly that a balanced reading program, with some emphasis on understanding and use, is desired by the school people in this study.

This rather objective point of view could also be noted in the group's free response answers written before they re-



## And It's All Known As Phonics

Time was, not so long ago, when phonics was without honor in educational circles. Today phonics ranks among the most highly respected subjects in elementary education. Everybody is talking about phonics. Parents, teachers, college professors, editors, columnists, educators, and laymen alike are airing their views on phonics.

It is not greater interest that is needed, but clearer thinking on the subject. Parents have discovered that the wrong method of phonics was more harmful than helpful to intelligent reading. The shocking experience of Barbara's father is a case in point.

Barbara S. was a first grade pupil in a school that was committed to the ABC-Phonetic method of learning to read. A period was devoted each day to the children's repeating: "The letter is *b* and the sound is *buh*; the letter is *c* and the sound is *cuh*; the letter is *d* and the sound is *dub*; the letter is *f* and the sound is *fub*"; and so on through the alphabet. Then one evening with her book open before her, Barbara proceeded to sound out the sentence: "*I sub-ee, see; a kuh-eye-tuh, kite; I see a kite.*"

"What on earth are you doing?" Father inquired.

"Reading!" Barbara answered.

The next morning found Barbara's father in the principal's office. "What are you teaching my child?" he asked, with unrestrained bitterness. "Barbara sounds out every word, letter by letter, and calls

it reading. When is she going to learn to read?"

Will Barbara learn to read with ease and understanding? That depends on her ability to learn. If Barbara and her classmates are bright enough, years of retraining may eventually enable them to become intelligent readers. But the odds are against them. The habit of sounding out the words is so difficult to unlearn that these children may never succeed in freeing the mind for the mental process of reading.

The realization of the harm that can be done by wrong methods of teaching is indeed a sobering experience.

Equally depressing is the sight of the stuff, tons of it, that is being sold to the schools under the magic name of *phonics*. Charts, cards, and word lists for daily drilling! With tricks and devices for teasing the taste, which hinder oftener than help the pupil in learning to read!

Many so-called phonic workbooks are among the worst offenders. Because workbooks are time consuming, their popularity as seatwork is unequalled in the primary grades. But let no one suppose that while the children are laboring over their phonic workbooks with pencils in hand they are developing word perception in reading.

Yet this, too, is called phonics. Every teacher should know that phonics is based on auditory acuity; on *hearing the sounds in words*. How can one distinguish between

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sounds except by *listening*? By *hearing* them? And workbooks make no sounds.

Failure to *hear* the sounds in words accounted for the errors recently observed in a second grade room. The assignment required that a ring be drawn around all the "ow's" that have the same sounds as in *owl*. Later while checking the workbooks, the teacher said proudly, "Isn't it wonderful what these children can do? Nearly everyone got all the sounds right!"

Did they? Nearly everyone had encircled all the "ow's" on the page; those in *snow*, *flow*, *grow* and *grown*; as well as those in *owl*, *cow*, *brown*, *plow*, *clown* and *growl*. And why not? How was the pupil to know the difference between the vowel sounds in *owl* and *snow*, except by *hearing* them? "Oh dear," the teacher sighed, when her pupils' errors were pointed out to her. "I can see now that the little dears were simply matching the letters! They don't know one sound from another!"

Yet the teacher believed she was teaching phonics! That her pupils were already on the road to independence in reading!

Some schools are teaching phonics by the "family ending" method. The pupils are drilled on isolated endings of syllables: *ap*; *og*; *ung*; *ell*; *ack*; *ick* and scores of others, as well as the consonant sounds: (s), (l), (r), (f), (p), etc. The familiar endings are then blended with the consonants and the pupils "sound out" the words: *sub*, *ap*, *sap*; *ul-og*, *log*; *er-ung*, *rung*; *sub-ell*, *fell*; *pub-ack*, *pack*.

And that too, is called phonics.

Although the exact number of "family endings" or their frequency of occurrence in the children's vocabulary (hence their usefulness in identifying the words) has never been determined, those who "be-

lieve" in the method are teaching it today as faithfully as did the pedagogues before them, generations ago.

Another method currently in use is based on the "initial blend" method of phonics. By this approach the children are taught the "short" sounds of the vowels: *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*. Then the consonants are taught also in isolation, namely, apart from the words in which the sounds occur. Having learned the sound (s) the children leap from *s* to *a* to form *sa*; from *s* to *e* to form *se*; from *s* to *i* to form *si*; from *s* to *o* to form *so*; and from *s* to *u* to form *su*. These units are then blended into the words: *sa-t*, *sat*; *se-t*, *set*; *si-t*, *sit*; *so-b*, *sob*; *su-n*, *sun*.

Experiment has shown that it is easy enough to blend *sa-t* into *sat*; and *se-t* into *set*. But when the children are taught the sounds (s), (a) and (e) as separate entities, they then have difficulty in blending the separate sounds into *sa*, *se*, etc. However, pronouncing the vowel with the initial consonant is superior to the "family" ending method in that it is in keeping with, and not contrary to the way words are heard in speaking and singing. To illustrate: the word *sat* is pronounced *sa-t*; and not *s-at*; the word *sun* is heard as *su-n*; and not *s-un*. Thus, by the "initial blend" method of phonics the ear aids the eye, a significant advantage in word perception in reading.

Unfortunately, these units are taught in isolation, apart from the word as a whole, thereby violating a fundamental principle in the psychology of learning.

Other current methods of phonics combine a number of techniques designed to promote word perception skills. Among these are the so-called means of auditory

discrimination (based on the assumption that one can *hear* that *baby*, *box*, *bunny* and *big* begin alike, since they all begin with the same letter); methods for remembering word forms; for developing and applying phonetic and structural analysis skills; methods of substitutions of vowels and consonants; the knowledge and use of rules for determining vowel and consonant sounds and syllabifying words; and the use of context clues in checking the identity of words, and their meanings in the sentences.

Perhaps the most shocking misuse of the substitution method was recently observed in a first grade room. The problem was that of identifying the words, *do* and *bump*. "Take *Tim* out of *to* and add the word *Dick*," the teacher instructed, "and you will get the word *do*. Now take *Jim* out of *jump*, and add *baby* and then what word do you get?" the teacher asked.

Of course, no one guessed the word *bump*. Would you have guessed it?

This, too, was done in the name of phonics.

Experimentation shows that accuracy in visual perception depends on auditory discrimination between the sounds in words. And skill in auditory discrimination is developed by *hearing* likenesses and differences in words. Learning that *baby*, *big*, *box* and *bunny* all begin alike is a *visual*, not an *auditory experience*. One *sees*, but does not *hear* that these words begin alike. Actually, one *hears* a *different* beginning in each of these words. Why? Because each of these words has a different *vowel sound*. Since one always hears the initial consonant *with the vowel* that follows it, one hears a different beginning in each of these words.

Our ears tell us that *baby* begins like *bake*; *big* begins like *bit* and *Billy*; *box*, like *bottle* and *Bobby*; and *bunny* begins like *but* and *bumpers*. Although *camels*, *cars* and *cucumbers* all begin with the letter *c*, our ears tell us that *camels* begins like *calendar*; but not like *car* or *cucumber*; *car* begins like *Carl* and *carnival*; and *cucumber* begins like *cute* and *cubes*.

Unless children learn to discriminate between the sounds in words, the groundwork in phonics is inadequate. Then the remedial reading teacher tries to supply what the children could so easily have learned in the beginning, but failed to get.

Not all "phonics" methods are equally effective as an aid to reading, something all parents and teachers should know. Many skills taught in the name of phonics have not the slightest chance of functioning in the children's reading. Others actually interfere with the youngster's thinking while reading.

The test of any phonetic method is not how well do the children know the sounds of the words they meet, but *how well can they read?*

To what extent has phonics freed the mind from mechanical difficulties for the mental activity of reading?

Barbara's brand of phonics had so encumbered the mind with letter sounds that reading was impossible.

How well can your pupils read their history, geography, and science textbooks? Their storybooks in literature and the arts, in the grades, in junior and senior high school?

If your pupils of average ability have not achieved independence in reading by the time they have reached the fourth

(Continued on Page 412)

## Flash Cards - The Opiate of the Reading Program?

Mabel was at it again. I could hear her 'way down the hall.

"Flash cards are the opiate of the reading program. Go sit in the corner, we say to them, and flash yourself some cards. It cures everything."

I caught her as she came past my door.

"Mabel," I said, "sometimes I think you are a termite gnawing at the foundations of the modern reading program."

"Termite!" she snorted. "The termites have been in 'way ahead of me.' I'm the exterminator, and the part of the reading program I'd like to exterminate isn't modern."

"Hush, Mabel," I cautioned, "the vested interests will hear you."

"The vested interests will be just as much interested in this as I am," said Mabel. "It's the gold mine for the next fifty years."

Then Mabel went into one of her famous imitations: "Child playing in corner with flash cards," she said, looking like a 60-year-old child. "The one with the dirty thumb mark on it is 'baby'. I always know it by that, else I'd swear it was 'lady' . . . 'Saw' and 'was' are easy, too. 'Saw' is the one with the corner torn off . . . I don't know what this one is; maybe 'played'. Do you know? Do you think it's 'played'? Well, let's call it 'played' . . . Say, here's another one that looks a lot like it. Which is which?"

"Aw, Billy came and took the game away from me. He says it's easy, a lot

easier than reading a book. He says he knows all the words in the game. He learned 'em two whole books ago. That's why he likes to play it: no effort.

"Sometimes Teacher lets Eglantine flash cards to a group of us dumbheads and has us guess what they are. Eglantine tries awfully hard. It's kinda nice, 'cause she tells us when we're wrong. Funny, though: sometimes I know 'em when she shows 'em, but they look different somehow in the book, all gummed up with those other words. And then there are those matching games. They're easy. You just look and match; you don't really have to know what the words say."

"What are you implying, Sarah Bernhardt?" I asked. "Aren't flash cards ANY good?"

Mabel gave me a slightly unfriendly look.

"Flash cards are a good testing device," she declared, "after you are pretty sure of the words; but they aren't a very good teaching device."

"Why not," I parried. "Can't tests teach?"

"Flash cards don't give clues to meaning and they don't show words in natural settings, the way children will have to meet them in life."

"Not always," I said.

"Almost always," she replied. "Children, left to themselves, learn to depend

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on smudges and tears for clues to meaning, when they should normally be getting clues from other words—getting fullness of meaning through many word associations every time they see the form. They keep going over the same old words long after they should have been replaced by newer, more important words.”

“Is that all?” I inquired.

“Of course not,” she answered. “Children who tend to make reversals can look at the words backwards or forwards; there’s no telling, and it makes no difference to the game. Two children play opposite each other and one has to look at the words upside down. Or two children can learn that ‘played’ says ‘gravy’, just because one of the children makes a brave guess. Does that teach reading? Does that make reading meaningful?”

“But Mabel,” I countered, “children like it. Teachers like it. Parents like it.”

“I suppose,” said Mabel shrewdly, “you would recommend marahuana by the same token? You forgot the dope pedlars. They like it, too.”

“Now, look, Mabel, old pal,” I pleaded. “Here we have all these word games and flash cards. The school is crawling with them. Aren’t they good for anything?”

“Sure,” she answered. “Use them to test new words after you’ve introduced them in meaningful settings. Let a child build sentences with them. Build sentences yourself and have him read them. Or let a child test himself—under dependable supervision—if there’s a reason for such a test. But let’s not do it hour after hour, kidding ourselves into thinking that the flash cards are teaching reading for us.”

“How do you think a child learns to

read, Mabel?” I asked.

“You know the good books as well as I do,” said Mabel. “The child doesn’t see the word as an old friend for a long time. He has to see it in a lot of contexts that suggest its meaning. He has to study the way it looks as we write it from left to right and say its name as we write. He has to notice how it is different from other words, or like them. Sometimes he has to write the word himself, thinking about its meaning as he writes. That should be enough to tell us that flash cards don’t do the teaching for us. Reading isn’t for parakeets.”

“Well, what are YOU doing about it, Mabel?”

“I’m not a genius yet,” she said, “but I have ideas. For instance, look at this.”

She held out a page:

bear

A boy saw a bear.

The bear was a big bear.

He was a black bear.

The bear saw the boy.

The boy started to run.

What next?

“Shakespeare or Bacon?” I inquired.

“All right,” she admitted, “it isn’t great literature, but it’s a start. *Bear* is the new word. All the other words have to be words the child knows. That’s why I have to make up my own or use the reader series material. The other commercial stuff hasn’t the right vocabulary.

“So the child sees the word *bear* and its picture and knows what the word is supposed to be. If I have written *bear* for him before, he has seen it start from left to right. Maybe that helps. Suppose I’ve asked him what other words start like



*bear* and he's noticed that *boy* and *box* do. That helps, too.

"As he reads each sentence, he meets that new word, and each time he thinks *bear* as well as sees *bear*. If I have him read this silently and later orally, and maybe underline *bear* from left to right, pretty soon *bear* should look pretty bearish to him."

"Go on," I encouraged.

"If the child writes an ending to the story, he has to write *bear* several times. That helps him get the shape in his bones. Or, if I have left out a *bear* or *boy* occasionally in the story, and he has to decide which belongs in the sentence and write it in, he has to think hard and write *bear* often. He is reading thoughtfully and getting *bear* battered into all his senses. He thinks it. He sees it. He writes it. Pretty soon he knows it. THEN I can flash it at him if I want to."

"That looks like regular seatwork," I commented, "or, forgive me, headwork. Have you given up running a easino?"

"Surprise, old Super Critic," she retorted, pulling a big envelope out from under her arm. "Here's my Las Vegas Special for this week—Eddie's Group."

She brought out a sheaf of long strips and a set of smaller cards.

"These long strips are sentences like the ones we've had in this last unit of stories in our reader. Each sentence has a word left out. Each child draws five sentences. The game is to keep drawing the smaller cards with the newer words on them, until he has all the sentences he holds completed. What do you think?"

"I think it's a losing game to argue

with you, Mabel," I replied. Disarm the enemy early and sometimes you win. "How will the children who play this game know whether they're right?"

"Oh, I could have a master sheet for a key, I suppose," said Mabel, "but I'm just mean enough to have them use their readers. If they aren't sure of a word and they can't agree on what it is, they can always check it with their readers. At the end of the game they get a special reviewer—someone who has finished his work and knows the words well. They have to read the sentences to him before they decide the winner."

"That's not so good as your bear idea," I said.

"No," she replied, "but it's better than pure, unadulterated, isolated word games."

"But how is a teacher going to make all this kind of stuff?" I asked.

"Is this a profession or a sewing circle?" she scoffed. "If you care about children, you do what's good for them."

"Come, Mabel," I begged. "Haven't you a word of encouragement for the weak in character?"

"Well-I," she said, slowly, "it's the children's education. Why shouldn't THEY dream up some of this material themselves? It would do them a lot more good than some of the things they do now."

"You know, Mabel," I said, "I don't think you object to flash cards. I think you object to their misuse."

Mabel smiled a big smile.

"You're catching on," she said.

I wish Mabel would stop jarring me. It's so comfortable not to think.

## Readiness to Change from Manuscript to Cursive

"When shall we help a child change from manuscript to cursive writing?" is a question which has bedeviled teachers some few decades—almost since the introduction of manuscript writing to this country, when its strongest advocates answered, "Never! Abandon cursive writing. It is archaic, impossibly difficult for children, and too standardized."

However, cursive writing continues to be used in our culture, it remains personally distinctive to each individual, and children do learn it (albeit not always well or happily) and the problem has become: When is the most effective time to begin cursive writing? When can children make the transfer with clearest imagery and smoothest execution, with the least frustration and waste of time for both children and teacher?

In relation to most things which we attempt to teach to human beings we have almost come to accept as fact that the learner must be *ready* to learn this thing. Readiness is basic to learning. It would seem only common sense to be guided by the same idea when we attempt to decide at what point we should teach children cursive writing.

Certainly, we can't say every child should begin cursive writing at the age of ten, or six, or eight. We know such a statement to be unsound in respect to beginning reading. Writing is equally individual. While most of the children of a given grade group may be able to start, there will be some who are not able, some

who are distinctly unready. Though we may say, "By and large, most children are ready to change to cursive writing when they are about — years of age, we must still watch each child closely and ask ourselves, "Is *this person* ready?"

But as we ask, how shall we recognize a child's readiness to begin cursive writing? What do we look for? The following statements may help us to define readiness as we observe each particular child.

This particular, individual child should show sufficient control of fine muscles to:

direct a pencil, chalk, or crayon in forming recognizable lines other than simple circle and straight line (this may be in drawing as well as in writing);

control the pencil, chalk, or crayon in a flowing movement from form to form with some evidence of rhythm, rather than in jerks and stops;

be able to do some of such co-ordinated movement without extreme tensing of muscles and without evidences of emotional disturbance (watch muscles of arm, fingers, mouth and tongue);

show exhilaration or some other evidence of satisfaction with the accomplishment of such control;

be able and willing to make large letters, rather than tight, cramped, very small ones.

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The child should voluntarily and repeatedly make connecting lines between letters, try slanting letters, and experiment with elaborating forms of letters. These are evidences of awareness of differences in forms, of muscular control, and of desire to try out other ways of writing. Such experimentation usually occurs preceding and during the times when he is persistently asking, "When can we learn to write like grown-ups?" "When can we write *real* writing?" These questions, too, are usually, though not always, evidences of readiness.

The child should have a fairly clear idea of relative sizes of letters and parts of letters in manuscript, so that he does not confuse sizes and parts.

He should be able to write all letters, small and capitals, in manuscript, without too much deliberation or uncertainty as to form. (Perhaps confusion of *b* and *d*, *p* and *q* should be exceptions to this point.)

The child should show evidences of enjoying the process of putting ideas on paper through manuscript writing. He should be able to write a simple story or letter of three or four short sentences without having to ask for help on every sentence and without becoming tired.

The child should show awareness of cursive writing, repeatedly expressed interest in attempting it, and some ability in being able to recognize a few words written in cursive writing.

The child should be emotionally mature enough that he can experience a few failures or repeated partial successes without becoming upset.

He should be able to listen attentively,

to watch another's movements closely, for the length of time necessary to write slowly a three or four letter word, without "fits and starts" of attention and without becoming tired and upset.

He should be able to follow simple directions.

His eye movements should be fairly well habituated to the left-to-right direction in manuscript writing.

If the child enters cursive writing experiences with enthusiasm, but later goes back to manuscript or mixes the two, this is not necessarily evidence of unreadiness for cursive writing. It is more probably indication of the facts that (1) ideas come faster than writing skill and (2) he is still uncertain of how to form certain letters in cursive writing. However, if he persistently reverts to manuscript unless encouraged toward cursive, or if he shows distaste for cursive, impatience with it, or an unusual decrease in the amount of writing he does, he is indicating that he is not ready for further experiences in cursive writing. He should not be pushed or coaxed into practicing cursive forms.

Writing, in any form, is a means to an end—the end of communicating to others our ideas, fancies, feelings. Whether one writes manuscript or cursive, is, after all, not so important as that he shall *have* ideas, fancies, feelings and be able to share them with other humans.

When making the change from manuscript to cursive writing we don't want our children to be plagued with Sam Weller's attitude toward learning the alphabet, "As to vether it's vorthwhile to vork so hard to learn so little is a matter of opinion."

## Geography Columns

When the new editor of the *National Geographic Magazine*, Dr. John O. Lathrop, was a young man, he earned his living as a telegrapher, and by association with reporters, developed a syndicated column devoted to geography and its relation to history. Dr. Gilbert H. Grosvenor of the Geographic Society read some of the columns and hired him to help put more zing into the magazine. That was at the turn of the century, and the editing which made the magazine attractive not only to scientists but also to ordinary readers brought millions of subscribers.

The art of writing a column devoted to geography and its relation to history can be cultivated in elementary English classes. Mary Ellen Chase in writing the story of her childhood in a Maine seacoast town in *A Goodly Heritage* says that the geography books seemed dull to the children whose seafaring grandparents had sailed the seven seas and brought back stories of Cadiz, Greenland, and the Cape of Good Hope. India and the China Coast were real to these Maine children through the stories. Not only stories of foreign countries, but stories of North America can be narrated. Where is "Little Egypt" in America? Who named the Ozarks? (The French, from *aux arcs*, at the bends.) Such stories belong in the English class as well as in history and geography, and a class might write a weekly column which could be compiled into a book at the end of the year.

George Stewart's *Names on the Land* (Random House) and *Highway 40* (Houghton Mifflin), Sealock and Seely's

*Bibliography of Place Name Literature* (American Library Association), Mario Pei's book *All about Language* (Lippincott), H. A. Calahan's *Geography for Grownups* (Harper), and Henry and Hinkle's *How to Write Columns* (Iowa State College Press) are background books for teachers. For 75¢ the teacher of English can receive the weekly *Geography Bulletins for Teachers* put out by the National Geographic Society from October to June.

English teachers who want to brush up on geography might take a course such as the State University of Iowa at Iowa City offers by correspondence called "World Geography" (3 semester credits at \$6 a point: \$18). The textbook, *Culture Worlds*, by Russell and Kniffen (Macmillan), divides the globe into seven major culture worlds: the Polar World, the European World, the Dry World, the African World, the Oriental World, the Pacific World, and the American World. After such a course, how much more interesting even a child's book is, like the new one, *The American Indian*, by Sydney E. Fletcher (Grosset and Dunlap, 1954, \$2.95). *Culture Worlds* provides suggestions for column material for a lifetime.

Through columns on geography and history written by themselves, boys and girls can realize the truth of Austin Dobson's words in *Ars Victrix*:

All passes. Art alone  
Enduring stays to us.  
The Bust outlasts the throne,  
The Coin, Tiberius.

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# Children's Writing, A Heritage in Education

This occasion is auspicious beyond the mere fact of so many persons gathered together in a morning meeting in Detroit. How rich is our bounty, as we assemble here! We are indeed the heirs of a glorious tradition. We humbly aspire to that great company of teachers who have dedicated themselves to the freedom of the human spirit . . .

We have with us, here and now, the bequest of those benefactors of mankind who knew that the creative spirit, once awakened, could open up new worlds. Although creativity and freedom may not stand as synonyms in any dictionary they are two sides of the same coin. Even in times of oppression it is the dream of freedom which keeps man's soul alive. Socrates, Cicero, Bacon, Erasmus, Emerson, Olcott, Parker, Dewey, Mearns—these great and other unnamed great in an unbroken chain link this moment of 1954 with the dawn of a noble idea. To invoke the name and spirit of these progenitors of creative education is a precious privilege amidst the new tests of freedom which the 20th Century flings at us. Socrates' command "Know thyself" is as timely in our day as in his. For self-knowledge is the *sine qua non* of self-revelation; and self-revelation is the essence of creative expression.

In our generation Hughes Mearns opened the way for both the spirit and the means of creative education. Mearns

discovered that his high school youth had riches of mind and heart that could venture onto paper in a climate of confidence and searching honesty. Mearns taught us not to criticize but rather to welcome as a gift the verse or song or story entrusted to us by children. He showed us that criticism brought either imitation or curtailment of writing. Mearns taught us that creativity finds a rhythm of production and that it does not, like a well-oiled machine, produce a composition a week or a poem a month. He demonstrated to us that uniqueness and freshness of insight are more valuable to teachers and children than neat margins. He discovered that excellence develops from honest writing and that youth can detect the insincere and the cliché.

Having found these exciting potentials in children he went on to bestir this courage in hosts of classroom teachers. In his book *Creative Youth* Mearns recorded for us teachers such verse as

## SUNRISE<sup>1</sup>

I've never seen the great sun rise  
For then I am in bed:  
The sands of slumber in my eyes  
Hold down my drowsy head.  
I think the sun climbs up the sky  
And throws the clouds away,  
Then girds her flaming tunic high  
And strides to meet the day.  
Soft-touched by birds' wings is her head  
Her feet caressed by trees  
She turns their leaves to gold and red  
And stoops to drink the seas.

Katharine Kosmak

Dr. Burrows is Associate Professor of Education at New York University, and author of *Teaching Children in the Middle Grades* and other works. This paper was read before the convention of NCTE in Detroit, November, 1954.

<sup>1</sup>Hughes Mearns. *Creative Youth*, P. 133. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Duran, 1938. By permission of the author.



From Mearns' classes thousands of teachers have gone on refreshed to be in their own unique ways the creative individuals whom children need to lead them to the learning necessary for a free, creative society.

Mearns, in turn, learned from the poet-teacher-philosopher, Santayana. In his sonnet, *O World*,<sup>2</sup> the elder teacher distilled for us the wisdom which Mearns demonstrated in his teaching. You will remember that Santayana avowed:

It is not wisdom to be only wise  
And on the inward vision close the eyes.

You will remember that in the same sonnet he said:

Columbus found a world and had no chart  
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;  
To trust the soul's invincible surmise  
Was all his science and his only art.

We could look further back to our progenitors in creative education. We could and should include tribute to Emerson and to Alcott whose fostering of the unique and childlike give us the immortal stories of his own courageous Louisa. We should look again at the advice of Francis Parker. We should do more than to refresh our memories of Sir Francis Bacon's injunction not to put weights upon the feet of those learning to dance.

But creativity is concerned more with the future than with the past, more with new invention than with past glory. This is true of American education at its best. It is a part of the American dream: *to be always on the way*. As heirs of a great bounty we look forward to even greater riches. We can do this with assurance. Teachers are finding time and courage to

foster in children such sensitivity and strength as to free them to be their most honest selves as were the fifth and sixth graders who wrote these verses:<sup>3</sup>

#### ALONE

Alone,  
All by myself-  
The house is empty  
Except for me.  
But what's that?  
Oh! Only my shadow  
Alone,—but no, I'm not.  
I've got my candle,  
My shadow,  
And I've got me.

#### ON THE BANK

I sit on the bank of the river  
And make little boats of wood.  
Their sails are made of paper.  
I put them into the water  
With my name and where I live,  
Hoping that someone will pick them up  
And know who I am.

When a child commits himself in verse or story with little regard at the moment for capitals and periods or for neatness of handwriting we need not worry, for we know that he will master those conventions the better for his glowing, inner experience. In looking ahead to new riches this assurance is for teachers a goodly heritage for it is just this dilemma which so often has led us to still the voice of creative expression. Consider the artistry in this report, carefully edited, corrected, and copied with scarcely an irregularity of spacing in the final paper. In making a copy for a permanent collection there was reason for painstaking effort. There was also no risk of losing the information already garnered from sources still objectively present.

<sup>2</sup>George, Santayana. *O World*, "Triton Edition of Santayana's Works," Chas. Scribners & Sons.

<sup>3</sup>Poetry by pupils of Miss Ruth E. Fiske, teacher, at the time, of 6th grade, Ridgewood, N. Y.

THE SURE-FOOTED PORCUPINE CLUMPS THROUGH THE FOREST<sup>4</sup>

In the woods the porcupine goes clumping along. He is dark brown or black and most of his hairs are white tipped. He is covered with quills that are very sharp. I'd hate to touch one. His feet are very small and he walks slowly. His eyes are small and he sees only a short distance ahead of him. His ears are very small so he can't hear much.

Porcupines are three feet in length. I think that's quite big. A porcupine's nose is about one inch long and he can smell better than he sees or hears. He weighs thirty five to forty pounds.

The mother and father look the same. When the baby is being trained, the father pushes him against a tree to train him to get into a ball. A porcupine has only one baby a year. It cannot see when it is born.

Porcupines are vegetarians. They eat vegetables. They eat wood and bark, too. Sometimes they eat trees. When they are really hungry they will eat anything. The way they drink water is they get leaves or anything that has water in it.

A porcupine is protected by quills, very sharp ones that are barbed. That means they are like fish hooks. If anyone touches him the quills come out. Porcupines don't throw them as most people think. They let something touch them and then they come out.

He moves slowly so that anything could catch him but he doesn't care. If anything touches him it will have a couple of hundred quills stuck in it. Porky can't make a noise. He eats at night because his enemy hunts by day and sleeps by night. A porcupine stays in one place for about a week and eats all the food he can find there. Three porcupines live together at the most—including the baby.

Freddy tried three titles before he decided upon "The Surefooted Porcupine Clumps Thru the Forest." Organizing his store of information from pictures and captions from the zoo, from people who

had known porcupine, and from reading into this logical account was also a creative enterprise for a fourth grader. Admittedly the material came from external sources. But Freddy made it his own. Note the childlike redundancy of "Porcupines are vegetarians. They eat vegetables." But note also the cadence and the mounting tempo of

They eat vegetables. They eat wood and bark, too. Sometimes they eat trees. When they are really hungry they will eat anything.

Writing and correcting such practical output as memoranda, notices, captions, and similarly functional missives provide compelling reasons for neatness, accuracy of information, correctness of spelling and punctuation, and learning the mechanics of English writing in practical communication, with only a minimum of isolated practice, adds visibility to the pride of the writer instead of becoming for him a meaningless burden of memory.

How rich is our bounty when we have learned to substitute for endless, dulling drill those techniques which regard the learner as a growing artist? Having a story file to preserve every scrap of story, even the barest, smudgy beginning, does more to build respect for writing than endless copy. Indeed, there is no excuse for copying a story at all, except in the rare instance of putting one into a collection for class or library use. Regarding the story as the child's possession asking if we may read it to the group and accepting the writer's decision is another technique which insures the writer's control of his own output.

Making story time the cherished goal of those days lucky enough to afford a

<sup>4</sup>By a fourth grade pupil of Mrs. Doris C. Jackson, Bronxville Elementary School, Bronxville, New York.

little extra time is still another way of according to artistry a proper portion of respect. Another important dimension is added in getting comfortably settled close enough together to feel the magic of the face-to-face gathering which so reassured our earliest forbears of their human status.

This gathering to read and hear one another's stories is no time for analysis and criticism. This is time for communication. Until the invented tale has reached an audience it is not finished. Once having brought together the writer and his hearers it has completed a cycle of communication. Correction is superfluous. In such an atmosphere the following tale acted for Myrna and her friends:

#### OSCAR, THE VITAMIN PILL<sup>5</sup>

Oscar lived with a lot of other vitamin pills in a box and after every meal a lady would take one.

Well it just so happened that one night this lady said, "I am going out for lunch and dinner tomorrow. So I will have to take a pill box with me to put my pills in."

But now comes the sad part. Our friend Oscar was right on top of all the other pills with his friend Tom. The lady picked up Tom and Oscar. Oscar and Tom knew what it meant but they were very brave about it and only cried a little.

Oscar's girl friend had told him if they ever parted not to worry because in the end they would all be in the same stomach.

Tom was a tough guy and thought that girl friends were silly but he said good-by to his mother.

Soon Oscar and Tom found themselves bouncing up and down in the lady's pocketbook. Then they heard a door slam. "We are coming to the end of the world

Boo hoo" said Oscar.

"Cheer up, Oscar," said Tom as he opened his own capsule to pull out his hanky because he was crying, too.

Just then the lady said, "I will have a large helping of spaghetti." Well, the lady was allergic to starch. The spaghetti came and there was a plate of bread so she took a large piece.

Well, with all this starch the lady began to sneeze and she sneezed and sneezed until she fainted. Oscar was saved but Tom was given to the lady to make her feel better.

Oscar was returned to his box and met by his girl friend. They squeezed down to the bottom of the box to where Tom's mother lived because Oscar was with Tom so it was his duty to tell her about Tom. She cried a little and then said good-by to Oscar and his girl friend as they left.

Soon Oscar and his girl friend were married by the minister in the left hand side way down under all the other pills. They rented a little corner of the box and were the last of the pills to be taken.

How great is our bounty? An inheritance of millions! Not of dollars but of opportunities. Millions of children, millions of moments when their human need of communication quickens to life the sparks of creativity! For the future nothing is more important than these sparks, whether only aglow or already incandescent, should light the way to new freedom and new awareness. The test of education in a democracy may well be the degree to which individuals learn to trust their soul's invincible surmise and thus, as Santayana revealed of Columbus, discover new continents, not of lands but of ideas and of ethics; new dreams by which to fashion themselves anew in music and dance and electricity; in clay and chemicals and wood; and in the enduring majesty of written words.

<sup>5</sup>By a fourth grade pupil of Miss Christine McCarty, Garden City Schools, Garden City, N. Y.

## Councilletter

The program for the 1955 Convention is one that we hope will have a lively and various appeal.

Headline speakers at the general meetings will be Norman Cousins, Archibald MacLeish, and Morris Bishop. In addition, Clifton Fadiman will conduct one of his radio literary quizzes at the luncheon meeting, and arrangements are being made for a special feature at the banquet.

The section programs on Friday morning and Friday afternoon are covering the usual wide range of topics connected with the teaching of English. These programs should appeal to teachers of all levels: elementary, secondary and college. One of the more unusual features of these small group meetings is that many have been planned with the help of other educational organizations. Some of the organizations that are co-sponsoring programs are the following: The American Educational Research Association; The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; The International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction; The Modern Language Association; The National Book Committee of The American Book Publishers Council; The National Council for Social Studies; and The New York Public Library, Young People's Service Division.

The co-sponsored meetings include such topics as "Implications of Recent Research in the Language Arts," "Teaching Reading in Junior and Senior High School," "The Teaching of Foreign Languages in Elementary and Secondary Schools," "Planning an Effective Language Arts Curriculum," "The Building of Permanent Reading Habits," "Interrelationships

of English and Social Studies," "The English Teacher and The Public Library."

Tentative plans include such speakers as the following: Theodore Bernstein, Assistant Managing Editor of the *New York Times* on writing; Lt. Col. Warren C. Thompson of the United States Air Force Academy now in Denver, Colorado on their new English curriculum; Professor Arthur I. Gates of Teachers College, Columbia University on problems in teaching reading; Professor Nila B. Smith, New York University on reading in the total school program; Professor Magdalene Kramer, Teachers College, Columbia University on the speech teacher and English; Dr. William Bristow on cooperative curriculum research in New York City; Dr. Abraham Lass on administrative provisions for superior youth; Dr. Clarence H. Faust on research in the acceleration of superior students; and many others well known to members of the National Council.

One other feature of the New York meeting is that the unique resources of New York will be used to add strength to the ideas expressed in the more formal parts of the program. With the help of the Local Committee, trips to libraries, museums, theaters, the United Nations, and other centers of interest are being planned for all who wish to take advantage of them. The program is being arranged so that many of these trips will not conflict with the general sectional meetings.

The Local Committee has already done an amazing amount of work in getting ready for us. We think it will be a good convention, and we hope that you are planning to come.

John C. Gerber, President

David Russell, Second Vice-President

# The National Council of Teachers of English

FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL  
OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Hotel Commodore and Hotel Roosevelt, New York

November 21-26, 1955

*Now understand me well—it is provided in the essence of things that from any  
fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater  
struggle necessary.*

—Song of the Open Road, Whitman

## PRELIMINARY PROGRAM (Condensed)

(Note: The following program is not complete, and there may be inaccuracies in time listings and other matters. Names of many participants are not included. The reason is that copy for the NCTE October magazines is due in early August, before all details of the convention can be arranged. Complete and corrected programs may be obtained from NCTE, 704 South Sixth, Champaign, Illinois, late in October.)

### MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21-23

*Visits to New York Schools.* For information write Margaret Nolan, Board of Education, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn 21, New York.

*Tours and Theaters.* If you have not received information on special tours and the current theatrical offerings, write to "Tours" at NCTE headquarters. Tours are available during most of the week.

*United Nations Institute.* Co-sponsored by NCTE and New York University. For details, write Professor Frederick L. Redefer, School of Education, New York University, Washington Square, New York 3, New York. (Tentative)

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22

Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9:30 A. M.—10:00 P. M.

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Meeting of the Commission on the English Curriculum, 9:30 A. M.—10:00 P. M.

Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9:30 A. M.—10:00 P. M.



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24

All day exhibit of textbooks and other aids for teaching (through Saturday noon)

Registration, 8:00 A. M.—10:00 P. M.

Meeting of the Board of Directors, 8:45 A. M.—11:00 A. M.

(All members of the Council are invited to attend as auditors.)

Annual Business Meeting, 11:15 A. M.—12:00 M.

Luncheon Meetings of Council Committees called by chairmen, 12:00 M.—1:00 P. M.

Working sessions of Council Committees, 1:00 P. M.—3:00 P. M.

Tours (See your special folder.)

General Session, 8:00 P. M.

*Presiding:* David Russell, University of California, Second Vice-President

*Invocation*

*Welcome*

*Address:* John C. Gerber, University of Iowa, President of the Council: "The Greater Struggle Necessary"

*Address:* Norman Cousins, Editor, *Saturday Review*: "The Information Crisis in America"

FRIDAY, November 25

9:15 to 12:00

I. *Teaching of Foreign Languages in Elementary and Secondary School*  
Co-sponsored by Modern Language Association

*Chairman:* Theodore Andersson, Yale University

II. *English and Social Studies in the Core Program*

Co-sponsored by National Council for Social Studies

*Chairman:* Arno A. Bellack, Teachers College, Columbia University

*Speakers:* Hall Bartlett, Citizenship Education Project, Teachers College, Columbia University

Elizabeth Rose, New York University

*Panel:*

III. *What about Reading in the Junior and Senior High School?*

Co-sponsored by The International Council for the Improvement of Reading

*Chairman:* Nancy Larrick, Random House, New York City

## ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

9:15—10:25: "Planning for Reading in the Total Program"

*Speaker:* Nila B. Smith, New York University

*Panel:* Crosby Redman, Head, High School English Department, Great Neck, New York

Margaret Nolan, English Program in Vocational High Schools, New York

10:30—12:00: "The Problem of the Poor Reader"

V. *The English Teacher Builds Permanent Reading Habits*

Co-sponsored by National Book Committee of the American Book Publishers Council, Incorporated

*Chairman:* Thomas Pollock, Dean, Washington Square College, New York University

9:15—10:25: "The Challenge to the English Teacher—As Others See It"

*Speakers:* Marchette Chute, author

Gilbert W. Chapman, Chairman, National Book Committee

Harold Guinzburg, President, Viking Press

10:30—12:00: "How the English Teacher Meets the Challenge to Build Lifetime Reading Habits"

*Panel:* Lawrence Conrad, Montclair State Teachers

Coburn H. Ayer, High School, Scarsdale, New York

Helen Sattley, School Libraries Division, New York City Board of Education

Fannie B. Leps, School 90, Baltimore

Walter Loban, University of California

VI. *Recent Research in the Language Arts*

Co-sponsored by American Educational Research Association

*Chairmen:* John J. DeBoer, University of Illinois, and Arthur E. Traxler, Educational Records Bureau

*Speakers:*

Ruth Strang, Teachers College, Columbia University

Nila B. Smith, New York University

William S. Gray, The University of Chicago

Harold B. Allen, The University of Minnesota

VII. *Planning An Effective Language Arts Curriculum*

Co-sponsored by Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development

*Chairman:* Gordon N. Mackenzie, Teachers College, Columbia University

11:00: Coffee break

11:15: Reporting and Evaluation Session

*Reporters:* Leonard F. Dean, University of Connecticut

Irwin Griggs, Temple University

Colonel G. R. Stephens, West Point

11:50: Conclusions

*Speaker:* Lou LaBrant, University of Kansas City

IX. *The English Teacher and the Public Library*

Co-sponsored by New York Public Library, Young People's Service Department

*Chairman:* Lillian Morrison, New York Public Library

*Speakers:* Two authors

Demonstration book talk for high school students—Elaine Simpson, New York Public Library

Storytelling—Mrs. Augusta Baker, New York Library

*Panel:* "Co-operation between the English Teacher and the Public Library"

X. *The English Teacher Develops Listening Skills*

*Chairman:* John Caffrey, Educational Testing Service, Hollywood, California

XI. *Meeting Individual Differences in Language Arts Interests and Abilities*

*Chairman:* Helen F. Olson, Queen Anne High School, Seattle, Washington

9:15—10:25

*Speakers:* Arthur I. Gates, Teachers College, Columbia University

"What Are the Facts about Individual Differences?" James R. Squire, University of California

"What are the Classroom Procedures and Materials that Assist in Meeting Individual Differences?"

*Recorder:* Lauren L. Brink, University of Nevada

10:30—12:00

*Demonstration:* Elizabeth Rose, New York University

Doris Coburn, Charles Sumner Junior High School, New York City  
Pupils of Mrs. Coburn

*Panel:* On the Elementary Level

Helen S. Grayum, Curriculum Consultant, Seattle

On the Junior High School Level

Nolan Brunton, Blaine Junior High School, Seattle

On the Senior High School Level

Edwin Nelson, Ballard High School, Seattle

On the College Level

Donald A. Emery, University of Washington

In the Elective Program

Earle Kelly, Ballard High School, Seattle

## ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

## Values and Evaluations

Edna L. Sterling, Director of Language Arts  
Seattle Public Schools

*Discussion Leaders:* George E. Salt, New York University  
Eric W. Johnson, Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia  
Robert B. Simpson, Columbia University

XII. *The English Teacher Utilizes the Mass Media*

*Chairman:* Louis Forsdale, Teachers College, Columbia University

XIII. *The Teaching of English to Spanish-Speaking Children*

*Chairman:* J. Cayce Morrison, Director of Puerto Rican Language Study, New York

XIV. *The English Teacher and Drama*

*Chairmen:* Samuel Withers, Jr., Scarsdale High School, New York, and  
Frank Griffith, Richmond Hill High School, New York

XV. *Common Themes in Literature from Many Countries*

*Chairman:* Max Bogart, New York University

XVI. *The English Teacher and Writing Abilities*

*Chairman:* Max J. Herzberg, Director of Publication, N.C.T.E.

*Speakers:* Mrs. Ruth Barns, Cooley High School, Detroit—"Teaching Practical Writing"  
Theodore Bernstein, assistant managing editor, *New York Times*—"Winners  
and Sinners in Writing"

FRIDAY, November 25

LUNCHEON SESSIONS, 12:30 P. M.

1. *Books for Children: A Luncheon for Librarians and Teachers in Elementary and High Schools* (Authors of children's books will be guests.) Speaker: Margaret Scoggin, New York Public Library
2. *Conference on College Composition and Communication*
3. *Journalism Luncheon*

FRIDAY, November 25

2:30 to 4:00

1. *Teaching English to Superior Youth from the Grades into College*

*Chairman:* Arno Jewett, Specialist in Language Arts, U. S. Office of Education

*Speakers:* Muriel Crosby, Director of Elementary Education, Wilmington, Delaware: "Enriching the Language Arts Program for Bright Children"; Carl G. Wonnberger, Director, Cranbrook School, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan: "Experimental Work in English with the Talented High School Student"; Abraham H. Lass, Principal, Abraham Lincoln High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.: "Administrative Provisions for Teachers of the Superior Youth"; Clarence H. Faust, President, Fund for the Advancement of Education, N. Y.: "High School-College Research in Acceleration of Superior Students"

*Panel:* Four gifted students representing elementary, junior high school, senior high school, and college will discuss ways to improve the quality of student learning in English. Each student will talk about 5 minutes under the leadership of Abraham Lass, who will act as moderator.

*Recorder:* Margaret Early, Syracuse University

2. *The Teaching of English as Communication*

*Chairman:* William Hoth, State University of New York

3. *The English Teacher Has Effective Appraisal Techniques*

*Chairman:* Clarence Derrick, University of Florida

*Speakers:*

"A Cooperative Venture in Evaluation"

John J. DeBoer, The University of Illinois

Constance McCullough, San Francisco State College, San Francisco, Calif.

Marion Sheridan, James Hillhouse High School, New Haven, Conn.

Althea Beery, Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio

4. *Various Approaches to Literature: A Symposium on a Whitman Poem*

*Chairman:* Gay Wilson Allen, New York University

*Speakers:* Malcolm Cowley, author and critic

Charles Davis, Princeton University

F. Dewolfe Miller, University of Tennessee

5. *Tours*

About a dozen special afternoon tours are being planned to supplement the morning discussions. Details will be included in the final program.

FRIDAY, November 25

ANNUAL DINNER, 7:00 P. M.

*Presiding:* John Gerber, State University of Iowa, President of the Council

*Invocation*

*Address:* Archibald MacLeish: "Why Teach Poetry?"

SATURDAY, November 26

Breakfast for Public Relations Representatives and for Officers of Affiliates, 8:15 A. M.

SECTION MEETINGS, 9:30—11:45 A. M.

1. *Elementary Section*

*Topic:* The Language Arts Program

*Presiding:* Edna L. Sterling, Director of Language Arts, Seattle Public Schools; Chairman of the Elementary Section



*Business Meeting*

*Speakers:* Luella B. Cook, Executive Coordinator of Curriculum, Minneapolis Public Schools: "The Scope and Sequence of School Program Interpreted by Classroom Procedures," Walter Loban, Professor of Education, University of California: "Research Translated into Classroom Practices"

*Questioners and Discussants:* Helen Grayum, Seattle Public Schools  
 Katherine Koch, Mishawaka Public Schools  
 Hannah Lindahl, Mishawaka Public Schools  
 Virginia Reid, Oakland Public Schools  
 Aldean Wesebaum, Detroit Public Schools  
 Esther Westendorf, Freeport, Long Island Schools  
 Alvina T. Burrows, New York University  
 Helen Huus, University of Philadelphia  
 June Felder, Rivera (Cal.) Public Schools  
 Constance McCullough, San Francisco State College  
 Elizabeth Rose, New York University  
 Miriam Wilt, Temple University

## ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 12:15 P. M.

*Presiding:* Mrs. Luella B. Cook, First Vice-President of the Council

*Invocation:*

*Literary Quiz:* Clifton Fadiman, Charles Bolte, and others

*Speaker:* Morris Bishop: "Faith in Literature"

## Proposed Amendments to the NCTE Constitution

In accordance with Article XI of the Council Constitution, the Executive Committee has authorized the submission of the following proposed amendments, to be voted upon at the Annual Business Meeting on Thanksgiving day in New York:

1. Article V, Paragraph 1 now reads: "Bona fide associations of teachers of English having 25 or more members, including English sections of city, state, or regional teachers associations, may become affiliates of the Council."

Proposed new reading: "Bona fide associations of teachers of English having 25 or more members, including English sections of city, state, or regional teachers associations, and student groups consisting of ten or more nonvoting members of the Council and organized under faculty sponsorship, may become affiliates of the Council."

Purpose: To make possible the formation of student affiliates in small colleges.

2. The first sentence of By-law 2 now reads: The annual dues for affiliates in Class C, having not over 50 members, shall be \$2.50; for affiliates in Class B, having over 50 but not over 150 members, shall be \$5.00; and for affiliates in Class A, having over 150 members, shall be \$10.00.

Proposed changes in this sentence: delete *and*, and add: "for student affiliates of 10-24 members, shall be \$1.00, and for other student affiliates, shall be the same as for Class C, B, or A affiliates, according to the number of members."

Purpose: To set the dues for the student affiliates described in the first proposed amendment.

3. Article VIII at present reads as follows:

"VIII. Committees of the Council

The Council shall recognize the following kinds of committees:

- A. General committees appointed by the Executive Committee to carry on activities at one or more levels of instruction.
- B. Intra-sectional committees appointed by the section committees to carry on sectional duties. Such committees must be approved by the Executive Committee of the Council."

The sub-committee on Structure and Mechanics of NCTE Committees, appointed by the Executive Committee to study and make recommendations concerning the kinds and activities of Council committees, and to draw up an amendment to the Constitution to establish a pattern for commissions and conferences within the Council, proposes the following amended version of Article VIII, with new matters italicized:

VIII. Committees, Commissions, and Conferences of the Council. *In addition to the committees authorized in Article VI, B1 and G1 (Nominating Committee and Executive Committee) and Article VII (section nominating committees and section steering committees), the Council recognizes the following kinds of committees, commissions, and conferences:*

A. Committees

- 1. General committees appointed by the Executive Committee *as standing committees or as short-term committees* to carry on activities at one or more levels of instruction. Such committees shall report at designated times to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Council.
- 2. Intra-sectional committees appointed by the section committees to carry on sectional duties. Such committees must be approved by the Executive Committee of the Council.
- 3. *Intra-commission committees (see commissions below) chosen by the commission to carry on commission activities.*
- 4. *Intra-conference committees (see conferences below) chosen by the conference to carry on conference activities.*
- B. *Commissions authorized by the Executive Committee of the Council to carry out specific large scale projects or studies. The director or chairman of a commission shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Council and members approved by the Executive Committee. A Commission when authorized shall have responsibility for establishing its procedures and activities, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee of the Council. A commission shall issue progress reports and terminal reports to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Council at times designated by the Executive Committee.*

- C. *Conferences authorized by the Executive Committee of the Council for specific or indefinite terms with the principal responsibility for holding meetings for exchange of views on specific professional topics. The chairman and other officers may be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Council or elected by the membership of the conference, as the Executive Committee of the Council authorizes when the conference is established. A conference when authorized shall have the responsibility for planning its meetings and interim activities, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee of the Council. If the Executive Committee of the Council so requests, a conference shall issue progress reports and terminal reports at times designated by the Executive Committee of the Council.*

4. A fourth proposed amendment will involve substituting the words *Secondary Section* for *High School Section* wherever the latter occurs. The reason is that teachers in junior high schools are normally enrolled in this section, and it is the belief of the section committee and of the Executive Committee that the change in name will make it more apparent that they are included.

### The NCTE Award for Television Drama—1955

The National Council of Teachers of English will present an award for television drama at the national convention in New York City in November, 1955. The programs listed on the ballot below were nominated by the associations affiliated with the Council.

The Award will be determined by popular ballot of *all* members of the National Council of Teachers of English. Will you please vote for the program which you, as a teacher of English, would like to see your national professional organization honor this year? You should select the program that has made the outstanding contribution to your classroom teaching from September 1954 through May 1955.

The success of this pilot venture depends on your cooperation.

*Please vote immediately.*

*Ballot for*

The National Council of Teachers of English Award for Television Drama—1955

VOTE FOR ONLY ONE

- ☐ *The Alamo-Davy Crocket* (Disneyland—ABC-TV)
- ☐ *Antigone* (Omnibus—CBS-TV)
- ☐ *Darkness at Noon* (Producer's Showcase—NBC-TV)
- ☐ *David Copperfield* (Robert Montgomery Presents—NBC-TV)
- ☐ *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Robert Montgomery Presents—NBC-TV)
- ☐ *Macbeth* (Hallmark Hall of Fame—NBC-TV)
- ☐ *Patterns* (Kraft Theatre—NBC-TV)
- ☐ *Peter Pan* (Producer's Showcase—NBC-TV)
- ☐ *Twelve Angry Men* (Studio One—CBS-TV)

MAIL TO:

Dr. Alice Sterner, Chairman  
Committee on the Study of Television,  
Radio and Film  
11 Seymour Street  
Montclair, New Jersey

This ballot must be postmarked *before* October 25, 1955.

[If you do not wish to cut out this page, copy your selection and send it to Miss Sterner.]

Elementary teachers suffered a severe loss this summer when Miss Grace Rawlings of Baltimore passed away. Miss Rawlings was at the time of her death a member of the Elementary Section Committee. She was also one of the ten persons primarily responsible for *Language Arts for Today's Children*. Dora V. Smith has written of her: "She worked tirelessly for the Council, she gave herself and her money to its various causes, but she never sought the limelight."

Miss Rawlings was principal of Public School 64 in Baltimore, and so well loved that parents wrote letters of tribute to Baltimore papers after her death. One of them said: "Her foresight and administrative ability prevented overcrowding; this school never saw double shifts of any sort despite the growing population, because she anticipated and planned for growth years in advance." And yet she found time to conduct a summer school public camp and to teach English to people in a home for the aged!

American education stands pleadingly in need of more teachers with the love, the strength, the vision of Grace Rawlings.

J. N. Hook  
Executive Secretary



Of the 48 registrants in the workshop sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English at Boone, North Carolina, 21 worked at the elementary level. Of the latter, 10 came from North Carolina and the other 11 represented Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Ohio, South Carolina, and Virginia re-

spectively. The majority were grade teachers in regular and Special Education classrooms ranging from first to eighth grade; several were supervisors, curriculum consultants, elementary principals, and educational directors.

The workshop participants delved diligently into recent publications of the Council including its journals, the most recent professional books, and the newest courses of study in the English language arts area. The various committees prepared bulletins such as the following: "Reading Lists for Retarded Readers," "Sources of Helpful Free and Inexpensive Instructional Materials," "Choral Reading Selections," and "Audio-visual Aids in the Language Arts Program." These were prepared in sufficient quantity for each member of the workshop to receive one or more. At the final session, the workshop members met in a round-table discussion to summarize their impressions of the present-day language-arts curriculum as reflected in the Council's publications. The session ended in an assembly where each committee presented its general findings in the form of demonstrations, exhibits, a mock preschool conference, and a follow-up "coke session" where new teachers threshed out their problems together.

Many afternoons and evenings were spent in trips into the mountains; attendance at famous Barter Theater in Abington, Virginia, at the Saturday afternoon folk festival directed by Richard Chase, and at Boone's noted outdoor theatrical production of "Horn in the West"; and in shopping expeditions to the area's fine craft centers. All members agreed that they had had a fruitful and friendship-inducing experience.



# The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS<sup>1</sup>



William A. Jenkins

Going to press at the start of the new school year, we look back on 1954-55 as a year of controversy. There were the continuing outspoken attacks and criticisms of public education, the heated discussions of the Flesch panacea for revolutionizing reading instruction, the debates over the fidelity of portrayal of both "the animals and their trainers" in *The Blackboard Jungle*, and the thunder coming from the contact of opposing forces on the integration issue. Constructively, ETV continued to grow, though the pace was not hurried, the Sauk polio vaccine was given to thousands of our pupils, and serious study of the problems of overcrowding, inadequate salaries, and shortage of teaching personnel were made by both professional and lay groups.

As we go to press issues less volatile have our concern, American Education Week, November 6-12, and National Children's Book Week, November 13-19.

## American Education Week

"Schools—Your Investment in America" is the theme of American Education Week. Daily topics are, Sunday: Your Investment in Character Building; Monday: Your Investment in Teachers; Tuesday: Your Investment in Classrooms; Wednesday: Your Investment in Fundamental Living; Thursday: Your Investment in Better Living; Friday: Your Investment in a Strong Nation; Saturday: Your Investment is Your Responsibility. Sponsoring organizations are, as usual, the NEA, the American Legion, the US Office of Education, and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Materials available for the AEW program are these: a basic packet, manuals, posters, invitation forms, seals, lapel buttons and tags, place mats, napkins, bumper strips, flyers for mass mailings, milk bottle tags, publicity items,

movie trailers, radio transcriptions, radio scripts, plays and pageants, booklets and leaflets, and certificates.

Write to the NEA, 1201 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington 6, for an order folder.



## National Children's Book Week

"Let's Read More!" is the slogan for special activities planned in observance of the 37th annual National Children's Book Week, November 13-19. Children's Book Week is sponsored by the Children's Book Council for the purpose of stimulating interest in more and better reading among boys and girls of all ages.

The 1955 Book Week poster depicts seven small owls listening as Mamma Owl reads a bedtime story by the light of the moon. It was designed by Garth Williams, well-known illustrator of such children's books as *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte's Web*. The poster, in six colors, is 17" x 22", is available at 35c, with reductions on quantity orders.

A trio of children's book illustrators has produced a set of Book Week streamers in two colors. Marcia Brown's streamer shows a young space traveller, complete with helmet and whirling propellers, as he watches two of his contemporaries engrossed in books float by overhead on a magic carpet; Douglas Gorsline has used beloved storybook characters; and Don Freeman's youthful range rider has holstered his guns as he perches atop a pile of books. Two are horizontal, one vertical. The horizontal designs may be folded in sections to stand; all may be pasted flat on windows or bulletin boards. They cost 30c for the set of three.

Other Book Week materials available from the Children's Book Council include full color

<sup>1</sup>Wisconsin State College, Milwaukee.

bookmarks reproducing the Book Week posters; a two-sided record *Singing History: Folk Songs and Books*, by Martha Bennett King; and a new picture quiz by Fritz Eichenberg. These and other Book Week aids are available from the Children's Book Council, 50 West 53rd Street, New York 19. Write the Council for the free descriptive 1955 Manual of Book Week Aids.



### **Book Week in Korea**

*Young Wings*, the monthly publication of the Junior Literary Guild, contains, in the September issue, an interesting discussion of "Book Week in Korea," by Nora E. Beust. Miss Beust was in Korea last November as a member of the American Education team. She found that Korean boys and girls enjoy reading as much as American boys and girls do, that there seem to be more libraries, per capita, than in the United States, and that the Korean boys and girls enjoy stories both from the U.S. and from their own country. In the former group Miss Beust mentioned *Treasure Island*, *Robin Hood*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Abraham Lincoln* (Ingri and Edgar d'Aulaire). The latter group included *The Biography of Hong Til Tong* and *The Buddha Who Ate Bread*.

The first book week ever celebrated in Korea was held last November, according to Miss Beust. The U.S. Information Service provided a theater and junior and senior high school students decorated, using the Children's Book Council's theme, "Let's Read." More than twelve thousand people attended the opening.

Miss Beust concluded her article by writing that the United Nations has turned over to Korea a modern printing plant where books for young readers may be printed.



### **Two New ACEI Bulletins**

*Children Can Make It!* (Reprint Service Bulletin No. 28) and *Art . . . for Growing*

*Children* (Bulletin No. 64) are two new pamphlets from the Association for Childhood Education International. *Children Can Make It!* consists of articles from the 1954-55 issues of *Childhood Education*, illustrating experiences that children can have in the world of materials. Many are exciting experiences and most of them reveal ingenious employment of materials at hand. *Art . . .* is a series of articles on how teachers have and can provide the climate for maximum creative power.

Each pamphlet costs \$.75. Order from ACEI, 1200 Fifteenth Street, NW, Washington 5.



### **Professional Writing Aids**

Aids to professional writing are *Print It Right* and *Let's Go to Press*, prepared by the National School Public Relations Association of the NEA. *Print It Right* (\$1.50) shows the professional educator-writer why he prints, what to say, and who his readers are. *Let's Go to Press* (\$1) is designed for the teacher whose job it is to channel news to the local newspaper. It tells how to develop a "nose for news," get stories into shape for printing, get good newsphotos, and organize an efficient school news reporting system.

Order from the National School Public Relations Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington 6.



### **Junior Literary Guild**

These are the Junior Literary Guild selections for October:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old:

*City Boy, Country Boy* by Miriam Schlein  
Childrens Press, \$2.00

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years old:

*Favorite Stories Old and New* (revised edition) Selected by Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg. Doubleday & Co., \$3.95

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years old:

*Exploring the Moon* by Roy A. Gallant  
Garden City Books, \$2.00

For girls 12 to 16 years old:

*The Long Way Around* by Esther Elizabeth  
Carlson, Reinehart & Co., \$2.75

For boys 12 to 16 years old:

*Wilderness Warden* by Edward C. Janes  
Longmans, Green & Company, \$2.75



### Betts Reading Institute

The 1955 annual institute on reading of the Betts Reading Clinic, Philadelphia, will be held November 15 to 19. Emphasis of the institute will be on differentiated guidance for the development of (1) permanent and worthwhile interests in reading; (2) versatility and independence in phonics and related aspects of word perception and recognition; (3) thinking and related aspects of comprehension. Further information may be obtained from the Betts Reading Clinic, 257 West Montgomery Avenue, Haverford, Pa.



### Writing for Children

Augusta Baker, supervisor of story telling, New York Public Library, will give a workshop course "Writing for Children" at the New School for Social Research, beginning October 19. The course will run both in the fall and spring, meeting on Wednesdays, 8:30-10:10 p.m.

Types of juvenile writing will be discussed, books on realism, fantasy, fiction and non-fiction, together with a study of illustrations in relation to text. Each student will submit and work on a manuscript at his own pace, with criticism and evaluation by the class and the instructor. Guest editors, authors, and critics will give occasional talks during the course.

For further information write to the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th Street, New York 11.



### Carnival of Books

Here is the schedule for the "Carnival of Books for October (consult your newspaper for the NBC station and time in your locality):

October 2—*The Mighty Soo* by Clara Ingram Judson; Follett

October 9—*Jane's Father* by Dorothy Aldis; Putnam

October 16—*Santiago* by Ann Nolan Clark; Viking

October 23—*Ordeal of the Young Hunter* by Jonreed Lauritzen; Little Brown

October 30—*Little Turkey* by Lester Rowntree; Viking



### Write for

*A Catalog of the Best in Paper Editions.* Free. The Paper Editions Book Club, 2233 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, Calif.

A listing of films for the elementary grades. Free. Frith Films, 1816 N. Highland, Hollywood 28, Calif.

"UCLA Children's Film Series." Free. The Children's Theater Committee, Theater Arts Department, University of California, Los Angeles 24. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.



### New Composition Pamphlet

John H. Treanor announces another pamphlet in his English Series: *The Study of Phrases in Composition*. Twenty-six phrases based on nouns with modifiers and verbs with modifiers challenge the creative ingenuity of pupils in grades 4, 5, and 6, by means of models and imitations.

Treanor English Series pamphlets are priced

at twenty-five cents. Write to the author at 5 Agassiz Park, Boston 30, Mass.



### *European Tours*

The National Council of Teachers of English, acting upon the advice of its Board of Directors, is tentatively planning sponsorship of three European Tours in the summer of 1956. If the plans work out successfully, details should be available by mid-January.

Here is a summary of the preliminary plans. It must be emphasized that these are still tentative.

1. The Council will select leaders, who will work out detailed arrangements with a reliable commercial concern, securing the advantages in prices and accommodations that accrue to persons travelling in groups. The Council's share in the planning will be a free service to its members.

2. The tours will be, basically, pilgrimages especially planned for those with a keen interest in literature, but will also include visits to sites of historical and artistic fame. Some free time for short individual jaunts will be provided. It is hoped that a number of lectures and meetings with European teachers and other more or less prominent persons can be arranged. The number of travelers in each tour will be limited to approximately twenty.

3. Expenses of the leaders, who will be Council members, will be included in the overall cost. Also included in the cost will be round trip transportation, transportation in Europe, comfortable accommodations, fees for special guides, admission fees to specified places of interest including some theaters, and all meals except on the individual jaunts.

4. Transportation will probably be by one-class ship, with the possibility that some members may fly if they prefer, meeting the group at a designated place. The cost will probably be somewhat greater for those who choose to fly.

5. Tour 1 will be planned especially for

those who have not previously been in Europe and will follow a somewhat conventional itinerary, probably including England, Holland, France, Germany, and Italy. Time in Europe: About 6 weeks, plus about a week each way on the boat. Probable cost: \$1,000.00 to \$1,200.00. Tour 2 will be intended more for those who have already travelled abroad, and will get somewhat off the beaten track. It is possible that Spain and Scandinavia will replace one or two of the countries chosen for Tour 1. Time in Europe: About the same as for Tour 1. Probable cost: Slightly more than for Tour 1. Tour 3 will be confined to the British Isles. Its cost will probably be \$200.00 to \$400.00 less than that of Tour 1, and the stay in the British Isles is likely to be about 4 weeks.

It is hoped that more specific information will be ready in time for next month's issue.



### *School Visitation Program at Convention*

The local committee making arrangements for the Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English to be held in New York City on November 24, 25, and 26, 1955 has prepared a program of school visits for those members of the Council who may arrive in New York prior to the opening of the Convention and who may want to observe classes in schools in the metropolitan area.

The list of schools, which includes those on the elementary, junior high, and senior high school level is an annotated one and specifies the distinctive features of the instruction offered in each school:—the integration of the entire program, for instance, or the differentiated program provided for bright, normal, or slow students; or the instruction provided in a specific area, such as reading, speech correction, creative writing.

The list will be available at Convention Headquarters at the Hotel Commodore on

November 21, 22, and 23. Or it may be obtained in advance by written application to

Miss Margaret A. Nolan  
High School Division  
Board of Education  
110 Livingston Street  
Brooklyn 1, New York



### Book fairs

*Elementary English* readers about the country who are not sponsoring their own book fairs in observance of National Children's Book Week this month may find it convenient to visit one of the eight fairs listed here:

New York: The New York *Times* "Reading Is Fun" exhibit will tour New York City schools and those of northern New Jersey, Westchester, Long Island, and Southwestern Connecticut.

Chicago: at Museum of Science and Industry, November 12-20; special Chicago *Tribune* "Miracle of Books" section; sponsored by the Chicago *Tribune*, the Museum of Science and Industry, and the Children's Book Council; 3,000 books.

Cleveland: at Cleveland Museum, November 6-13; Book Fair Supplement in Cleveland *Press* on November 2; puppet show; Lake Erie Junior Museum's animal circus; sponsored by Cleveland *Press*, Women's National Book Association, Cleveland Museum, and the Children's Book Council.

Detroit: at Detroit Historical Museum, November 5-20; four daily programs for children and an evening program for parents; sponsored by Detroit Federation Women's Clubs, Detroit *Free Press*, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Historical Museum, Public Schools, Public Library, Council of Parents and Teachers,

and the Children's Book Council; 1,500 books.

Washington: in the exhibition hall of the Pan American Union, November 13-20; original book illustrations; Pan American collection of juvenile books; Newbery-Caldecott award books, and other special collections; special Washington *Post* and *Times Herald* tabloid-size Children's Book Supplement on Sunday, November 13; sponsored by Washington *Post* and *Times Herald*, Children's Book Council, Washington Booksellers' Association, Children's Book Guild of Washington, and Pan American Union; 3,000 books.

Minneapolis: at the Art Center, November 13-20; model libraries in fields of interest for children; model record library for young people; sponsored by Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis Walker Art Center, and the Children's Book Council; 1,500 books.

Philadelphia: at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, October 30-November 20; special programs for children on Saturdays and for parents on Sunday afternoons; model children's library designed by the Sjostrom Company; sponsored by the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, and the Children's Book Council; 3,000 books.

Hampton (Va.): at the Huntington Memorial Library of Hampton Institute, December 2-4; puppet show, quiz program, showings of the motion picture, "The Impressionable Years"; sponsored by Huntington Memorial Library of Hampton Institute, American Association of University Women, Hampton City Schools, and the Children's Book Council; 1,000 books.

Information for sponsoring a book fair in 1956 may be obtained from the Children's Book Council, 50 West 53rd Street, New York 19.



# BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

May Hill Arbuthnot

Margaret Mary Clark

Edited by MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

*Mrs. Arbuthnot is well-known as a writer and lecturer in the field of children's literature. She is the author of CHILDREN AND BOOKS (Scott, Foresman, 1947) and three anthologies, combined in the single volume, THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY (Scott, Foresman, 1953).*

*MARGARET MARY CLARK reviews books of science, social studies, and biography. Miss Clark is head of the Lewis Carroll Room, Cleveland Public Library, and editor of ADVENTURING WITH BOOKS (National Council of Teachers of English, 1950).*

## A Joyful Announcement

*Tirra Lirra*. Rhymes Old and New. By Laura Richards. Foreword by May Hill Arbuthnot. Illustrations by Marguerite Davis. Little, Brown, 1955. \$3.00. (4-).



*Tirra Lirra*

period with your children you discover, somehow or other, that it must always include a nonsense ditty or two from *Tirra Lirra*. These verses are a hilarious "must" for home and school and it is good to welcome them back to a handsome new edition and a joyful circulation.

Laura Richards' *Tirra Lirra* is back in print this autumn because children and teachers would not let it go. If you plan a poetry

but a stout heart. Now the conclusion is a surprise. This is no hare and tortoise race, although it is a fable. The unexpected conclusion should warm the hearts of the Safety Councils all over these United States and certainly the story delights the children. Gay colorful pictures with only a faintly suggested personification add humor and vitality to this unique race.

*What's Your Name?* Written and illustrated by Zhenya Gay. Viking, 1955. \$2.00. (2-5).

The animals Zhenya Gay draws are so full of action and zestful grace it is hard to concentrate on what she has to say about them. But in this book, a rhymed riddle comes first and then if you can't guess, a picture will solve the riddle for you. And the pictures are a treat. The fives find most of the questions easy to answer, although penguin and polar bear give them pause. But the nursery crowd will like

## Gay Picture-Stories for the Youngest

*The Two Cars*. Written and illustrated by Ingri and Edgar d'Aulaire. Doubleday, 1955. \$1.50. (2-5).

"One magic moonlight night" two cars set off on a race. One was a new green car, high powered and speedy. The other one was an ancient red car with wheezes here and there



*What's Your Name?*

the book over and over. The lovely borders frame the verses and furnish clues to the answer.

*Frog Went a-Courtin'*. John Langstaff. Pictures by Feodor Rojankovsky. Harcourt, 1955. \$2.50. (4-8).



*Frog Went a-Courtin'*

Mr. Rojankovsky has made for the story some of his handsomest pictures. Bright with the springtime colors of meadow and bog, bouncing with action and eye-catching details, these pictures are *Frog a-courtin'*. He is a dashing, swashbuckling hero, and coy, decorous Miss Mousie is just the girl to catch his fancy. Children read the names on the mail boxes. They love Miss Mousie's slippers, and the pictures of the dancing flea and the sick chick always bring a chuckle. This is a delectable picture book to own, to read, to look at again and again and, of course to sing with the spirit and the understanding.

*What Can You Do With a Shoe?* By Beatrice Schenk de Regniers. Pictures by Maurice Sendak. Harper, 1955. \$1.75. (2-5).

Mrs. de Regniers is the creator of fresh and appealing books for the nursery age. *The Giant Story* was a memorable contribution. This is no story at all, but a bit of rhymed nonsense, lively as a grig and twice as funny. It owes much to the interpretative picture sequences of Maurice Sendak. A girl dressed up like a lady and a boy in a man's coat play a game. The boy is the teasing one. The question is, "What can you do with a shoe?" And the boy



*What Can You Do With a Shoe?*

proposes all sorts of absurd answers—"wear it on your head/Or butter it like bread? or use apple jam instead, ha ha", until the girl breaks in, "Oh, stop all that nonsense!/What do you really do with a shoe?" and the pictures show the answers. This pattern is followed with chair, hat, broom, brush and finally bed, with some of the funniest word and picture combinations we have seen. The rhymed pattern of each series reads delightfully and children follow the pictures with growing amusement. Mr. Sendak has made the comic strip glorified and really comic.

### Fun for All Ages

*The Duchess Bakes a Cake*. Written and illustrated by Virginia Kahl. Scribner's, 1955. \$2.00. (5-9).

The publishers are much too modest in limiting the age appeal of this book to some four years. It goes from the nursery to the college crowd with successful urbanity! Last year, the infectious gaiety of *Away Went Wolfgang* caught the enthusiasm of children and reviewers alike. Now Virginia Kahl has done it again, and this time in rhymes. The Duke, the Duchess, and their thirteen daughters with wonderful names, were getting along serenely until that momentous day when the Duchess decided to bake a cake. No ordinary cake, mind you, but a "lovely light luscious delectable cake." It was light all right. It rose and it rose and it rose! The Duchess tried to sit on it, which was fatal because she rose with it. "Her cries brought the family, one and another./'Come girls,' said the Duke, 'Say goodbye to your

mother." "I fear an improper proportion of heaven/Is taking my dear Duchess right up to Heaven." How to get her down again was the question. The solution involves the gayest rhyming and the most colorful and amusing pictures since Dr. Seuss got his honorary degree! In strong reds and greens with bold black lines and striking patterns, this is a book to catch the eye, tickle the risibles and to read or read aloud with sheer delight.

### Action for the Oldest Children

*Crystal Mountain.* By Belle Dorman Rugh.

Illustrated by Ernest Shepard. Houghton, 1955. \$2.75. (9-12).

An unusual book with fine social values is this story of four American boys living in Lebanon with their family. All of them speak Arabic and are genuinely fond of their Lebanese neighbors. John, Danny, Gerald, and Harry are happily engaged in a private exploration of the "Slanty Rocks" high up the mountain, when a red-headed English girl breaks in on them. Boadie, short for Boadicea, proves to be a good sport and her odd, Mary Poppinish governess, with her convenient "thinking days," leaves the children pretty much on their own. The mystery of a strange empty house which backs up to a cave, absorbs the five children, and Edmund, a spoiled brat they scorn, spies on them. Between solving the mystery of the house, rescuing an abused puppy from Edmund and reforming that young man's attitude towards the natives, Boadie and the four boys have a lively time. All ends happily with a moonlit picnic of grownups and children, English, American, and Lebanese, in the little house whose poignant history they have uncovered at last.

The children's play activities in this book are reminiscent of the Ransome stories. Glimpses of the wild mountain beauty of Lebanon and the gentle charm of its people make an unusual background for this well written story.

*The Journey of Johnny Rew.* By Anne Barrett. Bobbs-Merrill, 1955. \$2.75. (10-14).

Here is a search romantic for father and family. Johnny Rew had lost his mother in a London blitz and his father was thought to have gone down at sea. The Darleys, Cockney and kindly, had raised the boy and loved him. But at thirteen, Johnny found a clew suggesting that his father might be alive, so he promptly set off on foot to find him. He knew the family came from England's West country which has always produced her sailors. It seemed logical that his father might be there if anywhere. On the road



Johnny was given a lift by a lively family group, the Sherrads, and the mercurial Rose took Johnny and his problems as her special responsibility. When he was accidentally involved in a burglary and suspect, Rose helped him to escape the police. Shepherds, old women, gypsies, and inn keepers sometimes helped and often hindered his progress. The managerial Rose actually delayed the conclusion of his search by several miles and days. But the reunion of father and son came about at last, dramatically and almost tragically. Johnny's adventures make good reading but the background of the English countryside, the different ways of life from a shepherd's cottage to a wonderful old country house with its gentle chatelaine, the fine and the seamy folk he encounters, give a lively cross section of English life.

*Amigo Circus Horse.* By Page Cooper. Illustrated by Henry Pitz. World, 1955. \$2.50. (12-).

This is the best circus story in years. Not only will it enthrall young readers but also the grownups who love the big top. The story turns upon the neurotic behavior of Amigo, a magnificent but unstable circus horse. How-



*Amigo Circus Horse.*

ever, the real stars of the story are three circus youngsters. Franz is the fifteen-year-old son of Captain Szabo, rider of the Lippizan horses. Franz too is an equestrian of the *haute école* variety, but although he rides and cares for his father's horses he has lost his heart to the temperamental Amigo. Dolores, an orphaned youngster from the Argentine, is also an equestrienne, but Mulk, son of the Hindu lion-tamer, is a born wild animal man. The two boys and Dolores are inseparables and are all teasing each other about which one will make the big ring first. Meanwhile they are working with the stern self discipline of young perfectionists. Mulk goes into the ring first, not with the cats but the elephants. Franz and Dolores make it only in emergencies. Meanwhile there are elephant stampedes, wild animal escapes, Amigo performs brilliantly, and then suffers a nervous collapse and a long period of retraining at the hands of Franz. The most moving chapter in the book is the final performance of the aged Sadie, the great boss-lady of the elephants. The action of the story is thrilling but the gallery of minor characters, fully drawn with admi-

nable details, makes the circus family as familiar as next door neighbors. The details of caring for and training the big cats, the snakes, the elephants, and the horses are fascinating, and the "Three Musketeers" as the circus people called Franz, Dolores, and Mulk, will capture the respect and affection of young readers.

### Two Unusual Fantasies

*The Children of the Green Knowe.* By L. M. Boston. Illustrated by Peter Boston. Harcourt, 1955. \$2.75. (9-12).

*The Children of the Green Knowe* is a beautifully written English fantasy, a kind of juvenile *Berkley Square*. It is the story of a lonely child who enjoys the fleeting companionship of three children of his own family line, who died of the plague in the eighteenth century. But it is not a sad or morbid book. Their companionship is gay, and the three spirited children from the past enjoy their brief returns as thoroughly as young Tolly of this century enjoys finding them. For the solitary child and the special child this going back and forth between the present and the past in what is an

acknowledged fantasy (Linnet knows she is dead and Tolly knows he may never reach out and touch her), has the value of playing out one's dreams of companionship and of warm family bonds. It is, besides, an enthralling tale which this reviewer for one could not put down.

Young Tolly, whose father is in Burma, is sent back to live with his great grandmother in the family seat, a fine old country estate complete with a castle. From Granny the boy receives an immediate sense of love and security, and the old house, his own tower room with its old furniture and old toys, these seem familiar and home to Tolly at once. From the first night there he is conscious of other children. Presently he hears them, catches their vanishing laughter and knows that Granny sees them. When will he? Granny tells him stories of each of the three handsome children whose portrait hangs over the fireplace and of the wonderful horse Feste, who is gone with the children. Then one day Tolly sees them and after that they come frequently and at last he even sees Feste. Their play, the stories about them, and Tolly's adventures are sometimes thrilling and always absorbing to read about. But the background of the beautiful English countryside, the birds and little beasts, the gardens and woods, the benignant statue of St. Christopher and the sinister green Knowe, these are as vivid as the three spirited children from the past and young Tolly of today.

*The Wicked Enchantment.* By Margot Benary-Isbert. Illustrated by Enrico Arno. Harcourt, 1955. \$2.50. (10-).

This book is a marked departure from the moving realism of the author's *Rowan Farm* and *The Ark*. It is just what the title implies, a tale about a wicked enchantment that fell upon the peaceful town of Vogelsang. While the spell lasted, a stone maiden and a gargoyle disappeared from the cathedral, a nobody-knows-who was elected mayor and Anemone and her dog Winnie were so badly treated at home they had to run away. Aunt Gundula was



*The Wicked Enchantment.*

glad to take Anemone into her house and when she heard how mean the new housekeeper and her brat of a boy had been to the child and Winnie, she agreed that things were very bad indeed, especially as Anemone's father had sided with the housekeeper. This was just one more example of how everything in the town had been at sixes and sevens ever since the new mayor took over. Anemone and Winnie found delightful employment with a circus and managed to pick up a good deal of town gossip along with their pay. But things were going from bad to worse when Aunt Gundula got a clue that sent her into action. Then things happened fast. Spells came to an end, witches and mayors disappeared, the stone maiden and the gargoyle were once more in their stony niches, and human beings came to their senses and were restored to normal decency and affection. This is a lively fairy tale with perhaps a few too many adult overtones, but the witchcraft is thoroughly entertaining.

#### Social Studies

*Stampede for Gold; the story of the Klondike.*

By Pierre Berton. Illustrated by Duncan Macpherson. Knopf. 1955. \$3.00. (12 and up).

Here is an authentic narrative magnificently paced to capture all the color and drama of the Klondike gold rush. The author has based his story on diaries, published reports, and first hand accounts. As a child he lived in the Klondike where his father took part in the gold



rush. With this rich background he has succeeded in writing a vivid history of the strike, the personalities who left their mark, the heart-breaking hardships of the men who reached the wild country, and the failure of all but a small proportion of the seekers to find riches. The author does not limit his story to the gold rush alone, but brings in its impact on Canada and the United States. The Klondike comes alive as he conveys his own awareness of the beauty and ruggedness of the country. A skillful use of anecdote and brief character delineations gives vitality to this historic period. The illustrations, unusually numerous for this type of book, are excellent in capturing the atmosphere of the time.

M. M. Clark

*The Land and People of South Africa.* By Alan Patton. Illustrated from photographs. (Portraits of the Nations Series.) Lippincott, 1955. \$2.75. (12 and up).

Literature for children and young people has been enriched by the contribution of the distinguished author of *Cry the Beloved Country*, a powerful adult novel of Africa. For younger readers Alan Patton has written a fine travel and sociological book about his native country. Starting from Cape Town, he takes the reader through the provinces of the Union of South Africa, its cities, its pastoral lands and parks. Throughout the journey the special features of the land are brought out; the diamond mines, the gold mines, the wild animals, and a tribal reserve. There is fine historical information too, and the author traces the entry of colonizing groups and their effect on the country. He discusses the problem of racial separation and presents a final thoughtful chapter on the future of South Africa. The content offers absorbing reading, and while its greatest use would be at junior and senior high level, many chapters would enrich the study of the country for upper elementary children. The book is well indexed and offers a sixteen page section of photographs.

M. M. Clark

*Iran.* By Alice Taylor. Illustrated by Raffaello Busoni. Holiday House. 1955. \$1.75. (11-15).

In brief text accented with illustrations in color, the author introduces the highlights of modern Iran, together with a brief picture of its historic and illustrious past. The reader gains a good idea of the people, and how they live and work; their industries, culture, social and economic problems. The section on modern Iran is particularly illuminating, and shows what has been accomplished and



what still has to be accomplished for the successful future of the country. The part oil has played in Iranian economics is well presented. Similar to other titles in the *Land and People Volumes*, the book offers good concentrated information in attractive format.

M. M. Clark

*The Mighty Soo; Five Hundred Years at Sault Ste. Marie.* By Clara Ingram Judson. Illustrated by Robert Frankenberg. Follett, 1955. \$3.50. (12 and up).

Five hundred years saw the Soo develop from Indian land to one of the "most important single square miles in the world—in history, in industry, in service to man," and the author describes its story as the "biography of a place." Indians, explorers seeking the Northwest Passage, trappers, fur traders, and eventually the men who built the canal and locks, and later rebuilt and expanded them to meet the demands of industry and world trade, are all part of this saga of a waterway. Certain men stand out in this story for the greatness of their contribution. The most heroic of these is Charles Harvey who built the first ship lock

in 1855, after almost two years of superhuman effort. The author has successfully fitted the history of the Soo into the whole picture of American growth, politically and industrially, and she has breathed life into the leading characters who contributed to this chapter in history. The reader will finish this "biography of a place" not only well informed, but with an intense desire to see the country and watch the ships go through the locks, as described by the author in the final chapter. Based on wide research, the book has numerous illustrations, and is similar in format to Mrs. Judson's presidential biographies.

M. M. Clark

*The True Book of Holidays and Special Days.*

Based on a text by John Wallace Purcell. Illustrated by Arnold Kohn. Children's Press. 1955. \$2.00. (5-8).

This new title is one of the simplest that has appeared on the origin of well known holidays and will help fill the need for this



type of material for younger readers. Of the ten holidays included, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Lincoln's and Washington's Birthdays, Easter, and the Fourth of July are the

most fully treated in this forty-eight page, large print book. Halloween, New Year, and April Fool's day re-

ceive brief attention, and Valentine's Day is regrettably omitted. Nevertheless, the information will be most welcome and useful. Kindergarten and first grade teachers can introduce it to their classes, and second and third grade children can read it for themselves. Many black and white sketches with dashes of color add to the attractive format of the book.

M. M. Clark

*Wheels; a Pictorial History.* Written and Illustrated by Edward Tunis. World Publishing Co. 1955. \$3.95. (11 and up).

The author of *Oars, Sails and Steam* and *Weapons* has contributed another outstanding survey of man's inventiveness, based this time on what wheels contributed to modern transportation. Starting with the earliest known wheels, estimated at 5000 years old, he traces them, and the vehicles developed with wheels, through Oriental, Greek and Roman antiquity, the Middle ages, Colonial and pioneer days in America, to the self driven or powered vehicles of modern times. The illustrations are numerous and outstanding, with two or more finely detailed black-and-white drawings to a page. Like the other two volumes in this series, *Wheels* should be most useful in many units of social studies. Good upper elementary readers can follow the text, and the illustrations offer a rich background for many ages. There is no index, but the list of illustrations is quite comprehensive and helps to serve the same purpose.

M. M. Clark

### AND IT'S ALL KNOWN AS PHONICS

(Continued from Page 378)

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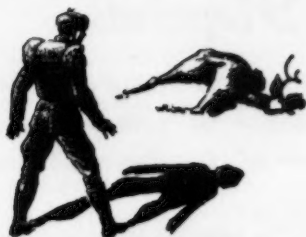
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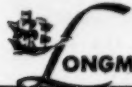
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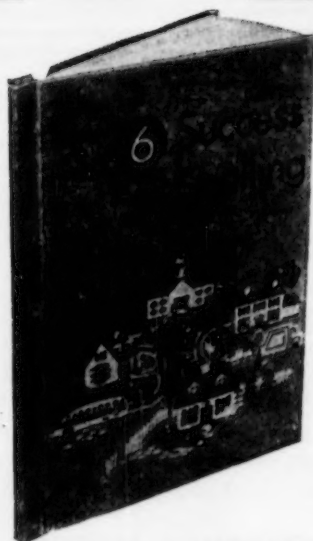
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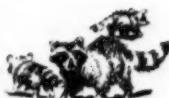
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